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ON THE COVER: A strategist, two creative directors and a marketer walk into a brightly-lit room at one of the country's most awarded agencies... What comes next? Well, wouldn't you like to know. In order, Jason Chaney, Peter Ignazi, Lori Davison and Carlos Moreno (did the hands give him away?) got all gussied up for photog **Ryan Walker** – and then he ghosted them. Don't worry, the enigmatic foursome eventually got their chance to shine in not-so-dramatic portraits, along with fellow Creative Report Card toppers from Cossette and FCB.

Pressing play on content

There's this new term bubbling up in the media: "pause-vertising." While it's genius in theory, I'm starting to wonder if the new ad format falls short on moving the industry forward.

New "pause" ads from Hulu appear on screens during a TV show, but only when viewers hit pause to go to the bathroom, for example. They're commercial breaks triggered by couch potatoes, in essence. That's the genius part.

Where the strategy goes wrong, is when you consider pop-ups. Though less intrusive, the Hulu ads are essentially an evolved version of the web's interstitial format. The advertising industry is in flux, but it seems the sales pitch is still very much alive – even after years of brands claiming that "pull" is the new "push" marketing.

Speaking with *Variety* about the new ad format, Hulu's Jeremy Helfand said moments like reaching for a snack is a "natural break in the storytelling experience" – so why not jump in to surprise and delight (as we'll no doubt hear some marketers soon recite)? While I support innovation on the format front, I also believe that brands are more approachable – and ultimately more effective – as content, not commercial, creators.

Long ago, U by Kotex proved that marketers can catch far more brand loyalists with entertainment, than promotion. No static "pause" ad will marshal the degree of engagement that *Carmilla* did with its legion of creampuffs, I'm willing to bet. The Hulu format is less intrusive, yes, but does it push the industry forward as much as when a marketer creates branded content that people wilfully opt into watching?

Harley-Davidson and Casey House (two AToMiC trophy-takers, see p.31) worked in collaboration with

networks HBO and Discovery to program branded content for broadcast. In Harley's case, its "film-ercial" was seven hours long – the equivalent of 4,200 six-second ads, all rolled into one long ad (presumably watched over time), seen by almost as many viewers of *The Big Bang Theory* in Toronto each week.

That's a lot of time engrossed, uninterrupted for the most part, in a single brand. Which is part of a point P&G's Marc Pritchard has been making for years. As he succinctly said to a room full of agencies, as reported by CNBC, in 2017: "There's too much crap... We bombard consumers with thousands of ads a day, subject them to endless load times, interrupt them with pop-ups and overpopulate their screens and feeds."

The CMO has since been calling for advertisers and agencies to ignite collabs that spark "fewer and better ideas that last longer." Canada, for its part, seems to be leading some of that co-branded/funded film charge. Tim Hortons, for example, recently aired a documentary in partnership with Sportsnet. The branded content about Kenya's lone ice-hockey team aired right after a game, creating that "natural break" advertisers seek.

Content – if I may be so trite – is still king. Bombarding consumers with television's equivalent of a pop-up ad is not – especially if your M.O. aligns with the rest of the industry to ultimately get people to press play, not pause.

Jennifer Horn, editor



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A LUXURY DISRUPTOR BRAND'S NEXT STEPS

By Josh Kolm

It can be an uphill battle establishing status in a category that's as obsessed with legacy as luxury auto.

Since launching in 2016 – without a dealer network – Genesis Motors has focused on building a disruptive brand to compete against heritage players. But now the Hyundai-owned co. is looking to become more product-led as it prepares to face competition in new models, with the impending launch of crossover SUVs.

Genesis buyers go online to customize their cars, which are then delivered to their home for test-drives and picked up for scheduled maintenance after purchase. That experience is unique, so Richard Trevison, director of brand for Genesis, says explaining it was a major focus of its initial messaging – promoting price transparency and home delivery convenience as key values.

“We’ll continue to build brand awareness, but we need drivers to want to test drive the vehicle. It is a brand message, but we’re making the product the hero,” says Trevison.

That shift toward product can be seen on Genesis’ digital projection screen inside Pearson Airport. Installed in December, the projection currently focuses on home delivery, but Trevison says it will soon change to talk more about “the pleasure of the drive.”

What’s more, auto insiders have been piling accolades onto Genesis’ vehicles, as they pick up prestigious titles such as North American Car and Truck of the Year. Those are bona fides that Trevison plans to bring to a wider audience.

“We’ve educated people about what makes the brand different – now we have to inform them about what sets the vehicles apart,” Trevison says, referring to its bigger focus on engineering and safety.

Last year alone, Genesis sold 1,441 cars in Canada – roughly 500 more than the year before. It’s hoping to keep the momentum going, with plans to triple its boutique retail footprint to 30 by 2021.

MALE GROOMING IS NOW BOOMING

By Justin Dallaire

It’s not only women buying lotions and potions; men are increasingly interested in practicing self-care. And brands are cashing in.

A report by WGSN predicts the global male grooming products market will surge from USD\$57.7 billion in 2017 to \$78.6 billion in 2023.

Most of that spend remains in the hands of multinationals like L’Oréal (with Men Expert) and Unilever (with Dove Men+Care) that benefit from mass distribution and existing shelf space. But newer niche players like Schaf, Consonant and Bulldog Skincare going to market, the next gen of men have more grooming options than ever before.



Breaking gender norms

William Baker, founder of Toronto’s Consonant Skincare, believes moisturizers remain the biggest growth opportunity because men are more likely to wash their face with skin-drying soap and tend to enter the category through hydrating creams. But he’s more skeptical about how much attitudes have shifted, as skincare remains a domain “most men don’t seem to be very comfortable in.”

Still, he says the growing acceptance of gender nonconformity will continue to have a positive impact on long-term sales across the category. “It’s becoming socially more acceptable for [men] to not only use beauty products, but to be seen using beauty products.”

Whereas many brands have positioned themselves as intended for men, Consonant doesn't have a male-specific line. Rather, to reach the growing segment, Consonant (and other minimalist beauty brands like Schaf Skincare) has products that are mostly unscented, not overtly feminine and marketed for all skin types so men won't feel self-conscious using them.

Finding eco-friendly solutions

"We're beginning to see a shift in men seeking products that are ethically made, cruelty-free and made with sustainable, natural ingredients," says Christine Jew, brand manager for Bulldog Skincare at Edgewell Personal Care, echoing a Mintel report that identified sustainability as the primary trend impacting the beauty industry in 2019.

The U.K.-based men's skincare brand, which already uses all-natural ingredients in its products, is expanding its selection this year, including a sustainable bamboo razor with packaging made from fully recycled stock. Last year, Bulldog also switched to ethically sourced, sugarcane-based packaging for its entire line, helping to differentiate the brand even further.



Speaking directly to men

Women tend to bring their boyfriends, partners and sons into Consonant's stores to test the products they buy, says Baker. While Milan Mladjenovic, GM of L'Oréal Paris, says the number of men making their own purchase decisions has significantly increased over the last six years. As a result, Men Expert has shifted its marketing strategy to "target and talk to men where they are and in their own voice."

This year, it signed singer Adam Levine as a spokesperson for the brand's first Super Bowl spot. And as men are more likely to buy online, L'Oréal has plans to accelerate the e-commerce presence of the Men Expert line.



PUTTING A NEW LENS ON SMART GLASSES

Companies, from starts-ups to behemoths, are once again trying to bring smart glasses to the masses.

Back in 2015, Google stopped making consumer-facing prototypes for Glass, but then repositioned the smart glasses as a tool for enterprise settings. Snap's "Spectacles" were initially met with a tepid response, but have caught on as the company enhances its performance and refines its design.

The smart-glasses market will grow 13% globally in 2019, according to Market Research Future. That opportunity is what convinced Waterloo, Ont.'s, Thalmic Labs to pivot its business, renaming itself North and focusing all of its efforts on its Focals smart glasses.

Adam Ketcheson, CMO at North, says the company designed its glasses – available in two stylish frames, with or without a prescription – to display incoming text messages, calendars, directions and weather, while also integrating tasks from Amazon Alexa and Uber.

In January, North shipped the first pairs of Focals to boutique showrooms in Toronto and New York, giving it a retail foothold

in fashion-forward cities and distancing itself from early adopters in Silicon Valley.

Trendy stores put Focals in the same consideration set as the Warby Parkers and Bailey Nelsons of the world, and pop-ups planned this spring aim to bring the brand to a wider audience. Retail also gets consumers to consider how the tech can fit into their lives. Experiential pop-ups for Google's Home smart speaker, for example, often recreate rooms of a house to show how the tech works.

Ketcheson says consumer interest in smart glasses is highest among those who already wear prescription eyewear. That's a big reason behind the premium fashion-inspired approach, as Focals could potentially replace stylish frames worn by those who can afford the USD\$600-and-up smart glasses.

"I don't think it's a mass product yet," Ketcheson says of smart glasses. "If we want to expand that opportunity, we need to put it on other people's faces. That's when you see the lightbulb go off and they understand how it'll make their life better in the future." **JK**

LEAPING AHEAD WITH CONTENT STRATEGIES

BY MEGAN HAYNES & BREE RODY-MANTHA



NO TWO CONTENT STRATEGIES LOOK ALIKE – nor do the business goals that feed them. Brands are constantly seeking new targets, exploring metrics, and tackling models to better drive sales. And with every new set of challenges, brands look to morph their content strategies accordingly.

While content programs used to be a nice-to-have, they have quickly become the solution to a modern-day marketing challenge: be personal and always be on. Looking at brands across categories – from QSR to finance – we examine how new business goals have led them to adjust their strategies.

Content can be lightning in a bottle for some marketers; replicating it can feel impossible at times. Here's how Interac, Canadian Tire and Tim Hortons are evolving their long-term branded content plays to do exactly that.

INTERAC TUNES INTO AUDIO CONTENT

HOW THE DEBIT-PAYMENT BRAND USED PODCASTING TO MAP THE SHIFT INTO B2B MARKETING.

Interac has been experimenting with branded content since 2016, with its strategy evolving alongside its marketing. And in 2018, when it began targeting businesses, Interac stuck with a content-first strategy – but pivoted from video series to audio podcasts.

Interac's content marketing has historically targeted Canadian consumers, speaking to issues like debt and personal finance. Its "21-Day Credit-Free Challenge" – starring reality TV star and personal finance guru Gail Vaz-Oxlade – centred around short videos with tips for living debt-free. The 2016 series aligned with Interac's broader "Be in the Black" messaging, which Zulu Alpha Kilo first spearheaded in 2014.

Then, in 2017, it launched *Upstairs Amy*, a series co-branded with Walmart. *Upstairs Amy* provided a mix of scripted video, as well as influencer marketing that followed a similar finance theme.

As Interac looked to expand further into B2B in 2018, it created *Earning Curve*, a six-episode podcast series that focused on small businesses. Hosted by *Dragons' Den*'s Michele Romanow, each episode covered topics based on common small business challenges. Interac continued to work with Zulu for the podcast, with production by U.S.-based podcast network Gimlet.

The podcast was part of Interac's latest effort to highlight products designed specifically for business clients (such as e-Transfers). "We felt it was time to reinforce our position as a business solutions provider within the B2B landscape and open up the door to conversion down the road," says Andrea Danovitch, AVP of marketing and brand at Interac.

Podcasting also offered Interac the ability to learn more about the business audience through content generation before it starts "putting out more tangible offerings that are part of [the company's] B2B roadmap."

There were also lessons to be learned from its earlier content programs. For *Upstairs Amy*, the brand was decidedly light on branding within the storyline, containing subtle Interac cues, such as a character paying for coffee with her debit card. "We wanted to be

a brand that people trust. At times, that means not even talking about your own proof points or products," says Danovitch. "In the case of something like a web series, we were able to compensate for that through pure entertainment value."

Interac carried that minimal branding approach through to *Earning Curve*, where it had few mentions in the actual content and instead relied on pre-roll and mid-roll ads. "The stories being told were just good content focusing on entrepreneurship."

One thing that did change was its distribution model.

For *Upstairs Amy*, the team housed the videos and social content in a central microsite that acted as a self-contained ecosystem. The series relied little on

paid media, instead aiming for organic growth.

As for *Earning Curve*, it had a more robust national media buy. Danovitch says that paid media helped reach its niche business audience and provided data to better inform its content.

Facebook and LinkedIn video were the primary drivers, along with display and native ads, as well as SEM and radio content during 680 News business reports. The brand also sponsored the *Canadian Business* Growth 500 feature, as part of its effort to reach a business audience, all of which was handled by Media Experts.

After three years, ROI on content is "still a very difficult

thing" to track, says Danovitch. "I think the objective is more about engagement levels with a brand."

Danovitch wouldn't share *Earning Curve*'s downloads, but says it surpassed benchmarks. The podcast was downloaded at twice the rate of other Canadian branded podcasts and was included in Apple's Best of 2018 podcast rankings.

Danovitch adds that Interac intends to keep content as a part of its long-term strategy, aiming to tie it even closer to the brand's overall marketing. "When you build these things in isolation of your overall plans, it's never as strong... you have the hub, but then you need to have the other [media] spokes amplifying it."



Above: Podcast series *Earning Curve* is the third phase in Interac's evolving content strategy.

CANADIAN TIRE CROWDSOURCES CONTENT

THE USER-GENERATED CONTENT PLAY BANKS ON THE BRAND TAKING A BACK SEAT.

A slow and steady pace wins the content race. Now in its fifth year, Canadian Tire's long-running "Tested for Life in Canada" platform was originally conceived as a small-scale content program. It has since morphed into a self-sustaining operation that currently informs both its marketing and the merchandising of products on shelf as it amps up efforts to be more authentic.

Today, the content-driven platform boasts 75,000 home videos of Canadians putting more than 10,000 products to the test. It's a far cry from the original panel of 40 consumers who helped create a mere 80 videos when the program launched in 2015.



Above: Canadian Tire's long-running "Tested" program has made its way into the brand's mass marketing campaigns.

"Tested" launched on the insight that if Canadians were going to truly believe a product review, then the brand had to take itself out of the mix, says Eva Salem, VP marketing at the retailer.

During the program's first year, the brand sent its panel of reviewers a bevy of products, along with a team from production company Notch to help shoot and edit the videos. The decision to be involved in the filming process wasn't born out of a desire to direct the content, says Salem, but rather a desire for quality control.

However, as the program's popularity grew, so too did the need to create a scalable solution, she says. The retailer and Notch created a "Tested"-by-numbers template for the expanding consumer panel to use when filming product reviews. Canadian Tire also got better at targeting its products to the right reviewers, sending tools

to DIYers, or gardening goods to green thumbs.

The shift to be less hands-on allowed the brand to flood its social and owned channels with the user-generated content. And with more products being reviewed, the retailer expanded the program into different channels.

"It was never meant to be a marketing platform," says Salem. "But the idea of leveraging it in our consumer-facing touchpoints became critical to its success."

In 2016, the brand rolled out the red "Tested" badge across flyers and POS materials. Salespeople were trained on what products had been tested online so they could make recommendations in store. On Canadian Tire's website, product approval badges linked through to video reviews. And because the company allocates marketing spend to positively reviewed products, they tend to perform better than the non-reviewed SKUs (selling 18% more products than those with no review), says Salem.

Going even further, when products are negatively reviewed, the brand works with the manufacturer to address the issue, says Salem, adding that if there's no resolution, the merchandise is delisted.

By focusing on products that receive positive reviews, the brand has seen metrics rise year-over-year. Since "Tested" first launched, trust in the brand has increased 9%, while quality perception rose 19%.

But in 2017, amid a host of negative press over the validity of consumer reviews (in recent years, some upstart brands have been caught paying for positive ratings), Canadian Tire undertook a survey of consumers to determine whether "Tested" still provides value.

The short answer is yes, says Salem. Canadians not only want unbiased and authentic reviews, they also want to leave their own personal audit of a product. Using that insight, the brand has begun to put its testers at the fore.

While the "Tested" review videos always featured real consumers, the supporting TV and online ads from Taxi typically featured the brand's spokesman putting the products through over-the-top tests. "[The idea was] if the product can survive this kind of test, it surely can survive your daily life," Salem says.

But with more focus on authenticity, its latest marketing campaign now includes real-life testers with their star ratings and reviews peppered in. And this year, the digital component features only testers and no spokesman, notes Salem.

"We're really leaning into the fact that we've given people this voice – and it's their voice, not ours."

TIM HORTONS TRADES ON EMOTION

INSIDE THE QSR'S LONG-TERM HOCKEY CONTENT STRATEGY GAME PLAN.

Over the years, Tim Hortons has evolved its branded content from expected traditional tactics to decidedly unexpected – and emotional – narratives; all in an effort to strengthen its ties to the sports community.

Its shift to emotional brand-building content is reflected in the “True Stories” platform (which was recently revived from the ‘90s), in which Tim’s uses real-life narratives to show how it’s a part of the fabric of Canada.

Hockey has a long-held place in Tim Hortons’ marketing mix. Its founder is, of course, a former Maple Leaf.

Since the ‘80s, the brand has sponsored Timbits hockey teams (a score-free game for young’uns) and local competitive teams. The coffee chain is a regular feature at neighbourhood rinks, and the sport has had a starring role in many of the brand’s TV spots over the years. There is a very authentic grassroots tie between Canadians, hockey and their local Timmies.

In 2015 the chain solidified its place in Canadian hockey, tapping NHLers Sidney Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon to launch a new marketing push around the sport. While content strategies typically live solely online, the QSR created a line of collectible trading cards as a tangible form of branded content.

The cards – which dish out stats on hockey players – is part of an ongoing program, with the cards returning for a limited time each year. When the cards first dropped, Crosby and MacKinnon starred in a series of YouTube videos. Created by J. Walter Thompson, the players donned the Tims uniform and jumped behind the drive-thru to surprise customers.

The campaign was a success, drawing in more than five-million views on YouTube alone. The hockey cards, which Canadians could purchase with a beverage, quickly sold out, says Jorge Zaidan, current head of marketing at the QSR. “Collecting is really something strong and a big part of the hockey culture.”

Early results from restaurants – including where the program was the biggest hit, what locations saw bumps in traffic, and which ones ran low on inventory – helped the brand optimize distribution of the cards regionally.

But while the company was able to perfect the distribution of the cards, Tim Hortons struggled to replicate early success of the spot with MacKinnon and Crosby. When it brought the hockey players back in 2016 and 2017, the emotional impact wasn’t there, Zaidan says.

“It was just less engaging,” he says. “All our messages

[were about] selling hockey cards. It was well-received, but we knew we needed to bring a great story [forward] that makes it very clear our brand loves this sport, that we share a passion for it.”

So the brand stepped away from stats and stars to get back to Tim’s grassroots sweet spot, with a content strategy that uniquely reinforces the brand. Working with Zulu Alpha Kilo for its 2018 edition, the brand refocused its content on the sport itself.

The team flew Kenya’s only ice hockey team to Canada, where they were given new equipment and played a pick-up game with NHLers. Content was uniquely shot and edited for different platforms, such as vertical video



for Instagram and horizontal for YouTube. The videos garnered more than 11 million views across social channels, Zaiden says. And the QSR saw a 142% increase in positive social sentiment.

Fans were calling for more hockey content, and so the QSR and Zulu created a 17-minute mini doc that later aired on Sportsnet. The film enabled the brand to fulfill on its recently launched “True Stories” platform, telling real-life narratives in a longer, more robust format.

“We have campaigns that need to sell a new product, a new beverage, a new donut, a new sandwich, that is an important part of our business,” says Zaidan. “But [we need] that emotional connection. We know that our brand is an intrinsic part of Canada. [It’s important to have] campaigns that really tie the values of Canadians and the emotion that keeps them coming back.”

With files from Catherine Phillips

Right: As Tim Hortons’ adopts a new (old) platform to tell “True Stories,” its content takes on similar themes in the form of an emotional documentary.



DDB'S ORIGINAL PIRATE MOVES ON

FRANK PALMER
REFLECTS ON THE
LOOMING "AGE OF
THE INDEPENDENT"
AS HE LEAVES HIS
AGENCY BEHIND FOR
NEW HORIZONS.

BY JEROMY LLOYD

Frank Palmer sees his departure from DDB Canada as bittersweet.

On the one hand, Palmer, 78, looks back on the business he built in Western Canada with a sense of pride. He helped turn Trend Advertising (a small Western Canada ad shop) into Palmer Jarvis (an agency that spread across B.C. and the Prairies). In the '90s, it evolved again from a middle-of-the-road agency to an award-winning national powerhouse that helped establish the careers of industry leaders such as Bob Stamnes, Tom Shepansky, Chris Staples, Ian Grais, Denise Rossetto and Andrew Simon (to name a few). During its formative years, DDB also strove to present a rebellious culture that ran counter to the bland corporate vibe of the big network shops.

"I have no regrets!," Palmer told *strategy* in an email in early January about his 50-plus-year-long career. As he prepares to step away from DDB on April 1, he lauds the agency team he leaves behind and the accomplishments they've made together.

But on the phone that day, the discussion focused more on how the industry is suffering under problems of its own making. Weakened

“When I started at Palmer Jarvis in 1990, it was the biggest agency in Vancouver, but also the worst. [Frank] knew he wanted more respect for his business but had no idea how to get there [on his own]. The thing I learned from Frank was that you should just hire smart people, let them do their job, support them no matter what and stay out of their way. Frank hired [then-EVP of creative] Ron Woodall and six years later we topped the Creative Report Card in 1999. Frank kept the clients happy while the agency made this transition, and spent the rest of his career defending that culture from the multinationals. Frank always put people first and really cared about the agency's product.”

- Chris Staples, partner and CD at Rethink

client relationships and a race towards commodification changed the business, he says.

“Our business right now is about how many dollars per hour we can get for something,” he says. “I don't want to be in the business of the blended hourly rate. That's a race to the bottom.”

Palmer's picture of modern advertising is not a flattering one. He believes it's no longer a business based on trust between clients and agencies, and that

a focus on rates has, predictably, changed agencies.

“Clients today are taking advantage of agencies, seeing how little they'll work for, not how well they'll work,” he says. “[They also] want to test everything. No great advertising gets through that sifting. Everyone's using this as an excuse to not take responsibility for the lack of good work. Testing makes everything vanilla... Very little advertising today is remarkable because people are paying for it by the hour.”

Palmer led DDB Canada as its president – and later chairman – after selling Palmer Jarvis to Omnicom Group in 1997. And today, he believes the agency has the right leadership in place to stay competitive. He says president Helene Leggatt in Edmonton and managing director Patty Jones in Vancouver (who now work alongside newly appointed Toronto-based CEO and CCO Brent Choi), will maintain the “pirate” spirit that birthed his agency.

Anyone who's worked for Palmer will tell you about one of his favourite mantras: “Be the pirates, not the navy.” It's his business philosophy that advocates breaking the rules when necessary – an approach he fought to maintain after the Omnicom acquisition, when employees feared they'd lose the culture that made it a destination for ambitious creatives.

“We still try to be pirates,” he says, “but it's getting harder and harder.”

Multinationals are less locally invested than they used to be, according to Palmer. Where the late Ken Kaess, president and CEO of DDB Worldwide, used to help Palmer on client pitches, he says that kind of

involvement is getting rarer and rarer.

“Holding companies are shutting down and merging operations,” he says. “We'll see more agencies merge than ever before because they're losing revenue left, right and centre.”

The future, he says, favours entrepreneurs who can be nimbler and more selective in their partners... like today's big agencies used to be, he argues.

“It will be the age of independents.”

While many septuagenarians would retire, Palmer is set to run a new independent shop after he officially leaves DDB.

Dubbed THINC, the *Dragons' Den*-style venture sees Palmer reunite with Bob Stamnes, who once oversaw Palmer Jarvis's McDonald's account and is now CEO of Vancouver-based Elevator Strategies.

THINC will operate in a few different spheres and will offer fairly standard marcom services – ads, branding and the like. But, primarily, Vancouver-based

THINC is designed as a startup accelerator where Palmer can use his “relationship guy” skills to bring together brands and startups – which could include small ad agencies, tech companies, cannabis brands, among others – to develop their marketing strategy.

Startups will also get capital from the investor brands that he brings to the table (and possible investment from Palmer himself).

“The ever-changing marketing communication advertising landscape requires innovators and reinvention,” adds Palmer. “It's not that advertising is dead. [Agencies just] don't have any new tricks. Old school tricks don't work anymore. The reality is that we now live in a... consumer-run world where brands are welcome to drop by, but only if they ditch the sales pitch and behave like regular people.”

“[Frank's] demeanour and personality are always open and honest. And he makes you feel that you have this great bond. It's a unique character trait that you don't come across often. With me, he's always been generous with his time and open about everything. I think that these traits have helped him and sustained him in the industry.”

He's always the optimist, but lately he's upset with the course that the industry is taking, its automation, et cetera. I imagine it's one of the reasons that you don't get big personalities like Frank in this business anymore.

- Alan Gee, chairman, creative at Arrivals + Departures

“We were hosting a bunch of clients at Sonora Resort. Typically on the first night at these things, people stay up and drink. The second night, Frank went to bed early and I decided that wasn't gonna fly. We opened his bedroom door at about two in the morning, and a bunch of us with full coolers of ice doused him in his bed. That was caught on film.”

The next day, I'm at breakfast across from him. He has that Frank Palmer shit-eating grin on his face. He says “Davey-boy, did you have a good sleep?” I said yes and asked why. “You didn't find anything in your bed?” I went back to my room and found that he'd gotten one of our fishing guides to put a live octopus under my pillow. It was still moving. I must have not noticed it the night before.

- David Leonard, former CEO at McCann Canada

MILESTONES OF A LEGACY

1969: Frank Palmer lobbies to be made partner of Trend Advertising in Vancouver.

1972: Trend Advertising is renamed Simon, Palmer and Leckie.

1974: The (again) renamed Palmer Jarvis lands the McDonald's account in Western Canada.

1980s: The agency grows through acquisitions in Western Canada, including Freeman/Yipp in 1982 and Leggatt Price in 1988.

1993: Unsatisfied with the agency's creative performance, Palmer hires Ron Woodall to lead a creative revolution.



1995: "Humungous Bank" campaign for Richmond Savings debuts with ads for a fictional monolithic bank. Richmond Savings would go on to double its assets under management over the campaign's four years. The work would evolve, winning Best Advertising Campaign at The Lotus Awards two years later.

1997: The agency's table at the Marketing Awards collapses under the weight of its many, many awards. Later that year, creative director Chris Staples collects so many trophies at



The Lotus Awards, a chair is placed on stage to save him from repeated trips to the podium.

1998: Palmer Jarvis is acquired by Omnicom Group, which rebrands the agency's six offices as Palmer Jarvis DDB.

1999: Palmer Jarvis DDB is named Agency of the Year by *strategy*, signaling its full emergence as a creative power house.

2000: The agency loses a tentpole client when McDonald's consolidates its advertising nationally with Cossette. Despite the split, the relationship would endure and produce awards in the future.

2001: Downtown Partners opens as a boutique affiliate in Toronto to primarily oversee work for Labatt Brewing Co. It would win Cannes Lions for the next three consecutive years for Labatt and Anheuser-Busch brands.

2004: Palmer Jarvis DDB is rebranded as DDB Canada and then-EVP creative Ron Woodall leaves the agency.

2008: DDB launches Subaru Canada's "Car Wash" a.k.a. "Sexy Sumos." The campaign won numerous awards and was named Best of the Best at the CMA Awards.

2012: The agency wins the Canadian Tourism Commission and launches the "35 Million Directors" campaign. "It's the kind of client you dream about," says Palmer. "It's a chance to help build the country."

2012: *Strategy* names DDB Canada and Tribal DDB as Agency of the Year and Digital Agency of the Year, respectively.

2013: Tribal DDB and Shopper DDB win three Cyber Lions from Cannes for its role in **McD's "Our Food. Your Questions."**

2014: DDB Canada wins Volkswagen Canada, eventually opening an office in Montreal to service the account.

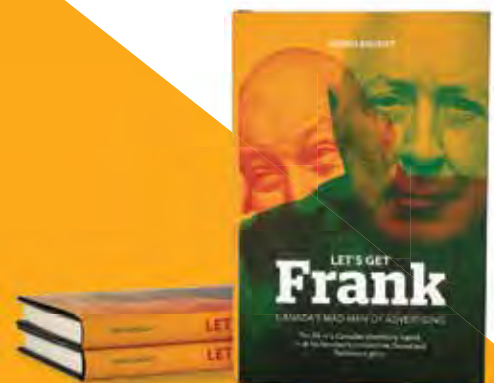


2016: DDB launches an accelerator program nationally, called DDB Ignite, which is designed to collaborate with startups on their brand platforms and communications strategies.

2018: The agency wins the Rogers' Wireless mass advertising and CRM business. 📺

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MCCANN'S SHEREEN LADHA DANCES TO OWN BEAT

The inaugural New Establishment: Innovators winner on her strategic side-hustles.

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

The
new
establishment
innovators

Shereen Ladha is the epitome of a millennial with side-hustles galore. By day, the 30-year-old is a senior strategist at McCann Toronto. By night, she's a Bollywood-inspired dancer, artistic director and choreographer with two cross-country touring dance productions and a YouTube channel with more than 100,000 subscribers. One of her videos – a remix of Justin Bieber's *Sorry* – even went viral, clocking in more than 750,000 views. She's been profiled in national publications, was a finalist on *Canada's Got Talent*, was named one of *Flare's* top 100 Canadian Women, as well as a CBC top female artist and runs one of YouTube's top 15 Canadian channels.

Throughout her studies at McGill University and early in her career, Ladha actively sought to conceal her post-work identity, believing her dance interests might make her seem unprofessional or less of a marketer. That changed when she learned to borrow from those creative talents while completing an MBA at York University's Schulich School of Business. As it turns out, there are benefits to making worlds collide.

"The artistic side of her life is proof that Shereen is truly a creative strategist, a hybrid of both a data and research-centred strategist and a culturally attuned creative," says Ally Dwyer-Joyce, a strategist at McCann Toronto.

Ladha has an analytics and data background, having got her start at Nielsen, before transitioning into strategy at GTB. She arrived at McCann in January 2018, shortly after it had been tasked with reinventing Suncor-owned Petro-Canada, whose brand identity had more or less stayed the same for 40 years. McCann pitched "Live by the Leaf," a patriotic brand platform that explored the diversity and shared values underlying the Canadian identity, and helped launch it in August 2018.



Ladha is now working with Petro-Canada on a robust social plan to appear on social platforms, such as Instagram, that were once foreign to the energy company. That's where having a strong and diverse following comes in handy. "[Ladha's] experimented with different formats and distribution, [and it] has allowed her to gain practical knowledge of what works where and why," says Dustin Rideout, CSO for McCann Toronto.

By being more intimately involved in the social sphere, Ladha has learned to speak to different audiences outside of Canada – about 40% of her YouTube fans reside in India – and to apply a deeper cultural understanding to her work. As a strategist on the Petro-Canada account, for example, she says she was "adamant" about making "Live by the Leaf" go beyond the

Canadian "plaid-wearing, igloo-dwelling, beer-drinking" stereotypes. Creative for the campaign shows a rich cross-section of Canada today, featuring people from different cultural backgrounds and territories.

"You can't take for granted the nuances between different cultures and even within cultures," she says, having learned that for herself outside of her day job. For example, she says she's learned that South Asians communicate differently in Canada than they do in India. They also "expect a level of cultural understanding" in every piece, whereas people in Canada, the U.S. and U.K. expect content that serves as "pure entertainment." These kinds of insights help her think through strategies for clients in Canada's growing multicultural cities.

"As a strategist, you have to have a deep understanding of humans and the context they operate in, their histories and their background," she says. Her side-hustles also help her stay current. "I'm not just reading about the latest Instagram update on TechCrunch," she says. "I'm living it."



Surprise (or not)! Cossette dominated the Creative Report Card for the second year in a row.

The CRC's top 10 lists, from creatives to planners, saw 15 people work on campaigns from the growing #1 agency, which is currently undergoing a creative renaissance thanks to #1 CDs Carlos Moreno and Peter Ignazi.

The agency, and top planner Jason Chaney (who now runs his own consultancy), helped SickKids win local and global accolades, catapulting the foundation into first position on the brand list, once again.

FCB Canada and sister agency FCB/Six also saw 15 of its current and former staff within the top ranks of the top 10 CRC lists, including #1 AD Devon Williamson and #1 CW James Ly (who now craft art and copy at Cheil Canada). FCB took the #2 spot, rising from #4 last year, after picking up awards for the "Destination Pride" campaign from #2 brand PFLAG Canada.

Will Cossette score a hat trick in 2020? Or will FCB keep its current momentum going and unseat the current kings? Only time will tell. For now, flip the page to read all about the top creatives and how they harnessed the power of teamwork, data and agile workflows to rise to the very top of Canada's ad industry.

Creative



ART DIRECTORS

1. Devon Williamson, Cheil
(formerly at FCB/Six)
2. Jaimes Zentil, Cossette
3. Spencer Dingle, Cossette
4. Carly Ouellette, Freelance
(formerly at Bensimon Byrne)
5. David Théroux, Cossette
6. John Larigakis, Bench
(formerly at DDB)
7. Mario Cesareo, Cossette
8. Meredith Klapowich,
Narrative
9. Gints Bruveris,
Bensimon Byrne
10. Joel Holtby, Rethink

BRANDS

1. SickKids Foundation
2. PFLAG Canada
3. McDonald's Canada
4. Casey House
5. Canadian Down Syndrome Society
6. FGL Sports
7. Prostate Cancer Canada
8. Ikea
9. WestJet
10. Kimberly-Clark

AGENCIES

1. Cossette
2. FCB Canada / FCB/Six
3. Rethink
4. Lg2
5. Sid Lee
6. Bensimon Byrne / OneMethod / Narrative
7. Ogilvy
8. BBDO
9. DDB Canada
10. Leo Burnett

CREATIVE DIRECTORS

1. Peter Ignazi, Cossette
Carlos Moreno, Cossette
3. Jaimes Zentil, Cossette
Craig McIntosh, Cossette
5. Ian Grais, Rethink
Chris Staples, Rethink
7. Ian Mackenzie, FCB/Six
8. Krystle Mullin, RPA
(formerly at FCB/Six)
9. Dave Laing, Scotiabank
(formerly at FCB/Six)
10. Andrew Bernardi, FCB/Six



Report Card

COPY WRITERS

1. James Ly, Cheil
(formerly at FCB/Six)
2. Craig McIntosh, Cossette
3. Jordan Hamer, Cossette
4. Philippe Brassard, Cossette
5. Sarah Rutherford, Cossette
6. Laura Serra, Narrative
7. Xavier Blais, Rethink
8. David Mueller,
Bensimon Byrne
9. Marty Hoefkes, FCB
10. Joseph Vernuccio, FCB

DESIGNERS

1. Patrick Stolk-Ramaker, FCB/Six
2. Oleg Portnoy, Cossette
3. Corey Way, Abacus.Agency
(formerly at Cossette)
4. Stuart Thursby, Stack Creative
(formerly at FCB/Six)
5. Anthony Chelvanathan,
Leo Burnett
6. Duncan Collis, Juliet Creative
(formerly at Tribal Worldwide)
7. Ryan Booth, Zulu Alpha Kilo
8. Alex Boland, Sid Lee
9. Jake Lim, Rethink
10. Wilson Wong, Freelance

PLANNERS

1. Jason Chaney, Ad.Vice
(formerly at Koho/Cossette)
2. Anna Percy-Dove, FCB/Six
3. John Fung, FCB/Six
3. Zac Matheson, Carat
(formerly at FCB/Six)
5. Aurora Stewart de Peña,
Publicis (formerly at
Bensimon Byrne)
6. Courtney Dionne, BBDO
7. Shelagh Hartford, FCB
8. Pascal Routhier, Rethink
9. Eryn LeMesurier, FCB
10. Shelley Brown, FCB





SickKids Foundation relies on the generous donation of time and talent from Canada's brightest creative agencies, production houses, music houses, directors, editors and photographers. Together we've raised almost \$800 million to build a new hospital for kids like Marlow. So we decided to use this donated ad space just to say "thank you".





LORI DAVISON

JASON CHANEY

Finding new crews

LORI DAVISON, JASON CHANEY AND COSSETTE BUILD ON SICKKIDS' STRATEGY TO REACH NEW DONORS.

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

For the most part, the SickKids Foundation (the #1 brand on the CRC list) has attracted middle-aged moms as donors. Steve “Dangle” Glynn is a new breed of donor/influencer.

He’s a 31-year-old professional YouTuber who tends to half-yell, half-talk. A lot. Right into the camera. These days he loves to yell-talk about SickKids – almost as much as he loves ranting and raving about his beloved Toronto Maple Leafs.

Glynn is part of the “Blue&Whites,” a group of hardcore Leafs fans who had heard of SickKids, but generally didn’t donate. Along with the “Cyclists,” the “Dog People,” the “Lefties” and the “Cosplayers,” Glynn’s gang is one of 50 so-called “crews” – the hospital is tapping to reach well beyond its traditional donor base online.

Following the first two phases of SickKids’ “VS” campaign to raise \$1.3 billion (which will help rebuild the aging downtown Toronto hospital) phase three launched in October with yet another rousing spot. The “Join your Crew” commercial, created by #1 agency Cossette, features actor Colm Feore calling on people in the GTA and beyond

to find their “crew.” It was also a turning point for the platform, with the foundation making the donor the protagonist of the story, instead of just the kids, says Lori Davison, SickKids’ VP of brand strategy and communication.

“It’s a celebration of all of the people who, in spite of their personal interests and subtle differences, share one common goal, and that’s winning for the kids,” says Jason Chaney, the #1 CRC planner, who used to work at Cossette and now does strategic consulting work for the foundation through his consultancy, Ad.Vice.

Naturally, says Davison, an influencer-based media strategy was developed to target those “crews.” Working with Citizen Relations, it enlisted 50 influencers

to speak to cultural groups as obscure (and important) as the “Boxers” and the “Straight Razors.” The team identified influencers based on passion points that people identify with, says Davison.

Crew leaders were briefed on the campaign theme but ultimately each made it their own, amplifying their messages organically: *Amazing Race* winners Kristen and Steph hosted a friendly competition rallying their followers, YouTuber Danoracy (and his pup) created video content, and fitness leader Cassie Day hosted an in-person event raising \$5,000. For his part, Glynn appeared in “The Blue&Whites VS Limits” ad and then went one step further by inspiring a fellow hockey fan to create The Marner Jar website – which has collected close to \$7,000 primarily from Glynn/Leafs fans as of press.

The strategy was designed to help SickKids’ reach new donors, and have influencers become a rallying voice. “While there were bigger more theatrical aspects to the campaign, the influencer portion delivered a personal, grassroots experience,” notes Chaney.

The strategy has brought in more one-time donations than any other SickKids’ campaign, says Davison. While the organization is making strides on its long-term strategy to amass monthly donors – having recently hit 100,000 – “Crews” has broadened the scope to include people

who may have never donated at all, such as fans of Glynn.

Only a few months in, Davison says SickKids is learning to prioritize the most effective influencer groups and planning around seasonal opportunities. For instance, the “Celebrators” are likely to take a prominent role during Canada Day and Victoria Day weekends. And as the hockey season winds down, SickKids aims to recruit baseball fans for a Toronto Blue Jays crew, after all opening day is not far away.





PETER IGNAZI



CARLOS MORENO

Creative couplings

BY MELISSA DUNNE

THE TOP CDS ON BUILDING A WORK MARRIAGE THAT SPAWNS AWARD-WINNING ADS.

Peter Ignazi, one of Cossette's global chief creative officers, casually sprawls out his long limbs at one end of a conference table. While Carlos Moreno, Cossette's other global CCO, sits ramrod straight at the other end of the table in the agency's cavernous head office in Toronto's Liberty Village.

"Last year was our 20th year working together, so that was the '90s – the time of *Seinfeld* and *Friends*," says Ignazi, donning a hoodie, leaning back in his chair as he reminisces about times gone by. "And how we've worked together has evolved considerably because we started

working as a creative team, just as a copywriter and art director."

"Things have evolved," Moreno, the art director of the two, concurs. "One thing I feel is very lucky to have Pete every day."

"Thank you. You never told me that," says Ignazi (half-sincerely, half-joking – it's hard to tell). "It feels like we're in therapy," quips Moreno, clearly enjoying riffing with his long-term work partner.

Indeed, an interview with the creative heads at Cossette, does feel a bit like therapy for the pair, who first met at BBDO in the late '90s.

The dry-witted duo are ranked as the #1 CDs on this year's Creative

TIE
RANK
3

+
COPYWRITER
2



CRAIG MCINTOSH

TIE
RANK
3

+
ART DIRECTOR
2



JAIMES ZENTIL

Report Card for the second year running, and many of the other top creative directors have also sustained long-term partnerships that's led to acclaimed work, both at home and abroad. Craig McIntosh and Jaimes Zentil (#3 CDs and #2 AD/CWs), also of Cossette, have stayed together for more than 17 years, while Chris Staples and Ian Grais (#5 CDs) of Rethink, have stuck it out for more than a quarter century.

Having team leaders with strong chemistry has proven very good for business.

Cossette hired 205 staff, 73 of which were creatives, across its six Canadian offices last year alone. The agency has also undergone a creative renaissance since Ignazi and Moreno joined in 2015, with the shop eventually taking home a prestigious Grand Prix at the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity for the #3 brand McDonald's Canada and its "Follow the Arches" campaign in 2018.

And out on the West Coast, Rethink has added to its creative teams in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. It also won accolades for four of

the top 20 brands on this year's list, including IKEA (#7), WestJet (#8, FGL Group/Sports Experts (#9) and YWCA (#20).

The business and creative growth of both Cossette and Rethink is, thanks, in part, to the level of trust and confidence that the CRC's top six CDs have all cultivated, allowing them to get to braver work and to sell it through.

McIntosh and Zentil were "thrown together" as interns at BBDO in 2000 and worked their way up to ACDs at the agency, before following Ignazi and Moreno over to Cossette in 2015 as CDs.

"It's pretty rare," says McIntosh of his very successful long-term work partnership. "It's kind of like an arranged marriage, but it did work out surprisingly. My wife [who also works in advertising] has been through 11 or 12 partners."

"It's a little bit of ying-yang," says Zentil. "We balance each other out. Having similar perspectives on things and having similar styles and interests I think goes a long way."

TIE
RANK
5



CHRIS STAPLES

TIE
RANK
5

IAN GRAIS

Zentil is very introverted, while McIntosh is more gregarious. The two balance each other out and have pumped out globally awarded creative, including the emotionally wrenching “VS” work for the #1 brand SickKids and design-driven work for McDonald’s “Follow the Arches.” The creative combo is so successful that the two were recently promoted to ECDs.

“They have done a great job of cultivating the culture of creativity here at Cossette, so it just made a lot of sense to elevate them to that next step,” says Moreno, who adds the agency aims to promote from within whenever possible.

Staples and Grais, co-founders and co-CDs at Rethink in Vancouver, have the same philosophy, preferring to “train the puppies our tricks,” says Staples. And like Zentil and McIntosh, the Rethink pair find that strong long-term work partnerships often work well between people with contrasting personality traits and skills.

“Ian and I have very complementary strengths so we’re able to excel in our own sort of quadrants and not overlap too much and that means we’re not in each other’s way,” says Staples.

“I’m much better at motivating a team and selling through ideas to clients and being involved in overall business strategy,” adds Staples. “While Ian is quite Zen and very reflective and he’s always scribbling

in his notebook with great ideas.”

“We come at the work from many different angles,” says Grais, adding: “Collectively we’re stronger than some of our parts.”

Acknowledging differences while having a shared vision is key, adds Grais, who co-founded Rethink with Staples and Tom Shepansky in 1994. Ignazi and Moreno echo those sentiments. The pair were promoted to global CCOs at Cossette early last year and have found a new normal. That’s meant downloading more of the day-to-day work to McIntosh and Zentil, while the dynamic duo spend more time focusing on their shared long-term plans for the agency.

Like all successful partnerships, having a similar set of core beliefs (which includes a thirst for creativity) is what led to all six creative leaders to climb to the top of Canada’s ad industry. On the surface, Ignazi may slouch when Moreno sits up straight, but if you look deeper you’ll see (and hear) they align on the things that truly matter.

“We have a vision for the work. Fundamentally we have not stopped working on creativity and that’s the solution for everything,” says Ignazi. “Creativity is not a risk, it’s a fundamental belief here at Cossette and Carlos and I have always believed that. It doesn’t matter what’s going on in the world, creativity will solve it and will be the last thing that’s replaced by robots.”

Staying agile

FCB/SIX'S EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR
IAN MACKENZIE ON FAILING TO WIN.

Fail fast, fail often, fail forward. That's the mantra repeated ad nauseum by Silicon Valley start-up types the world over, including in Canada. It's also been a key philosophy of Ian Mackenzie, FCB/Six's ECD and #6 CD on the CRC list, ever since he joined the data-first creative agency almost three years ago.

FCB Canada's sister shop uses an agile workflow in a bid to build compelling creative for clients. That approach has paid off, with FCB coming in as the #2 agency, primarily for work for PFLAG Canada (#2 brand) and the Canadian Down Syndrome Society (#5 brand). The 18-month process of creating PFLAG's "Destination Pride" campaign was all about building iterations that failed, until finally they got to the current version, which won the Strategy Awards Grand Prix, the CMAs Best of the Best and 13 Cannes Lions.

Mackenzie looks to the tech and gaming industries for inspiration on how to work better and faster. Under his leadership, along with FCB/Six's president Andrea Cook and EVP of strategy, Anna Percy-Dove (the CRC's #2 planner), the trio are fans of using an agile workflow rather than the more traditional "waterfall" method.

"Agile is an alternative production methodology that works in sprints," explains Mackenzie. "Basically you iterate, then you prototype, then you launch. And then you take learnings, you iterate, you prototype and launch." Over and over and over (see p.26).

The agile approach means people frequently move in and out of the project. That's why the credits for "Destination Pride" lists 33 agency people. So the lone ECD certainly knows that no man is an island, and considers Cook and Percy-Dove his partners in lieu of a traditional co-ECD. "When I have moments of doubt or if I need help, or I need to spitball something, those are the people I go to first," he explains.

FCB/Six has always been different, in both its vision and approach. The agency started when FCB's Rivet was rebranded in June 2016 as a "small, super lean" team that would focus on merging data, creative and technology to create ads for our digital-first world, says its ECD.

It currently has about 90 staff across offices in Toronto, Montreal and New York City, and several of its staff don't fit in traditional boxes,



with many in hybrid roles that combine digital and creative skill sets.

"You'll find agencies that are really good at creativity or really good at technology," says Mackenzie. "Our vision is to be really good at both at the same time, at the same place, for the same people."

Mackenzie and this team have been able to make that vision a reality by not being afraid to fail. Again. And again. And again. Until finally hitting on the winning iteration. **MD**



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RANK

2



ANNA PERCY-DOVE

TIE

RANK

3



JOHN FUNG

TIE

RANK

3



ZAC MATHESON

Walking the walk

The top creative ranks of the report card are quite white and quite male. This is both a shock and not a shock at all. On one hand, it's 2019. On the other, it's reflective of the culture at large – only 24 CEOs on the Fortune 500 list identify as female. As for CRC, only one woman made the top 10 creative directors list, another in design, two in copy and three in art direction. The only list to buck the trend was planners, where six women made the top 10.

Four of those female planners work at FCB and sister shop FCB/Six. This does not shock EVP of strategy Anna Percy-Dove, who landed in the #2 planner spot with her colleague and director of strategy, John Fung, at #3.

"We're an agency that is very women-centric," she notes.

Percy-Dove says she thinks talented women are attracted to the agency's "open and collaborative" culture.

That collaborative style – plus the diversity of not only gender, but also of age, race and sexuality – was a big selling point for PFLAG Canada, an FCB/Six client and the #2 brand.

"I think diversity is very important," says Louis Duncan-He, national director of marketing at the non-profit that unites families and allies with people in the LGBTQ+ community. "It makes it seem as though there aren't any egos at play because there's not one type of person that's leading the charge. It's really a group effort."

The data-heavy "Destination Pride" campaign would not have even been a seed of an idea if it had not been planted due to FCB/Six's diversity.

Staff who identify as gay "were integral through the project - from conception, through ideation and into the iterative development phases," says Percy-Dove. "This meant that at every stage they could contribute

through the lens of their personal experiences and unique view of the world, which was critical to ensuring 'Destination Pride' actually answered the needs of real people."

Having an agency that encourages diversity in all its forms has clearly been a competitive advantage. The Cannes-winning "Destination Pride" campaign was integral to FCB rising to #2 on the agency list, from #4 in 2018.

FCB/Six – which is led by president Andrea Cook and was born out of Rivet a mere three years ago this June – has always made diversity within the workplace a priority, says Percy-Dove. And that diversity has helped the young shop grow steadily, at a rate of 30% year-over-year in 2018.

What's more, diversity also gives the agency a broader network to tap into. Like Percy-Dove, Zac Matheson (the #3 planner) also hails from Down Under. Matheson, who was a strategist at FCB/Six (but later moved to Carat to become a comms planner) tapped the expertise of people in his circle, including a data scientist mate back in Australia.

Of course, it helps when there's buy-in from the top. Carter Murray, FCB's worldwide CEO, teamed up with the I.D.E.A. Initiative at Cannes in 2017 to launch the #CreativityInColour event. While FCB Canada CEO Tyler Turnbull has led local initiatives to address the issue within the agency and, today, 68% of the management team are women (62% within the entire agency), while 22% of its staff are visible minorities.

FCB's leadership is not just talking the talk, but walking the walk by ensuring its agency is not quite as white and male as has traditionally been the case. Ultimately showing that doing the right thing feels good and can be very good for business. **MD**



JAMES LY

DEVON WILLIAMSON



Casting spells with art and copy

Great ads cast a spell over consumers via the magic of pairing just the right words with just the right picture.

For more than a half-century, art-and-copy teams would sit in a conference room (or at a café or bar) batting around ideas until they conjured up that magic pairing of words and image, as if out of thin air. But, over time, the sanctity of the art-copy team has given way to a more collaborative approach.

The CRC's #1 copywriter and #1 art director, James Ly and Devon Williamson, work closely with each other – but also with people who have job titles that did not yet exist back when the late Bill Bernach (co-founder of DDB) first teamed ADs and CWs back in the day.

"We work closely with one another, but also with others around us, the strategists, dev team, account team, social team, producers, designers," says Ly, who currently works alongside Williamson at Cheil

Canada (they previously worked at FCB/Six, where they led art and copy for "Destination Pride"). "Ideation often breeds more questions than answers [that are] well beyond our scope of thinking."

With the rise of the digital age, creatives now often work closely with everyone from coders to data scientists to create multi-platform campaigns. But it's not just who art/copy teams work with that has evolved, but also the nature of those creative roles.

"Traditionally, the role of an art director has been conceptual and client-facing, while the role of a designer was largely production-oriented. That's changed," says Williamson, who started out as a designer at Tribal DDB.

"[Today]... the best designers have the ability to think in a conceptual and abstract way and the best art directors have a strong set of design skills to leverage." **MD**



Working on "Destination Pride" was like being "a Sherpa amongst many getting an idea up a mountain," recalls Ly, who was one of 33 agency people on the project credits. The data-heavy work for #2 brand PFLAG Canada went through several iterations over 18 months.

The platform, heralded for its ingenious use of the iconic Pride flag did not actually include this visual feature until after the first prototype was built, about four months in.

That's when creative lightning struck then-FCB ACD Krystle Mullin (#8 CD and now a CD at RPA), who came up with the idea of reimagining the rainbow-coloured symbol of LGBTQ+ rights as a dynamic bar graph.

From there, Ly and Williamson helped lead the campaign through several iterations (shown above) using an agile workflow (see pg. 23) to push that idea to the mountain peak.

RANK

3



JORDAN HAMER

RANK

3



SPENCER DINGLE

Winning together

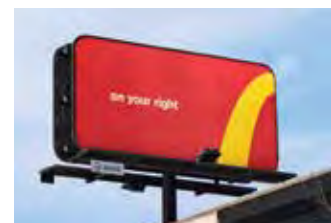
Spencer Dingle is a bearded millennial who has a similar sartorial style to Mark Zuckerberg. Meanwhile, his close colleague Jordan Hamer is a millennial with a beard who also has a penchant for jeans and hoodies.

This has led to many cases of mistaken identity. While the duo do not look identical (Hamer wears glasses, while Dingle does not) they look enough alike and spend so much time together that they have constantly been mistaken for one another at work. “Even Peter and Carlos have messed us up,” says Dingle. “We’ve been working with them for like 8 years and they still mess us up!”

The pair previously worked under Peter Ignazi and Carlos Moreno at BBDO, who invited the talented twosome to join them at Cossette in 2016. Originally hired as an art/copy team in 2012, the duo were recently promoted to ACDs.

Since joining Cossette, Dingle (the #3 art director) and Hamer (the #3 copywriter) have worked on Cannes, Applied Arts, AToMiC and ADCC-winning work for McDonald’s Canada. And both credit their close collaborative style for their shared creative successes. “We’ll call each other out and that back-and-forth is what pushes us to make better work,” says Hamer of their working style.

While the new-ish ACDs don’t currently “own” any brands, they have taken a “pretty strong lead” on upcoming projects. They are also focused on mentoring the next generation of creatives with a purposefully hands-off approach inspired by Ignazi and Moreno (the #1 CDs). And while the close duo’s job titles have changed, one thing has stayed the same for the ACDs – no one ever seems quite sure which one is Spencer and which one is Jordan. **MD**



The road to Cannes started with Dingle and Hamer working at a coffee shop on a different project. The pair talked about what it would look like to take minimalism to the max. The duo were riffing back-and-forth when Dingle sketched what would become the “Follow the Arches” campaign in his sketchbook. “We looked at each other and we were like: ‘That’s pretty good,’” recalls Dingle. “It almost felt a little too simple, but it felt big for some reason.” After getting buy-in from #1 agency Cossette and #3 brand McDonald’s, the minimalist OOH ads were placed on billboards in Toronto.

Designers in many forms

WE ASKED THE CRC'S TOP THREE DESIGNERS ABOUT THE EVOLVING PRACTICE, AND TO SHARE A PERSONAL PROJECT THAT VISUALLY REPRESENTS THEIR CRAFT.

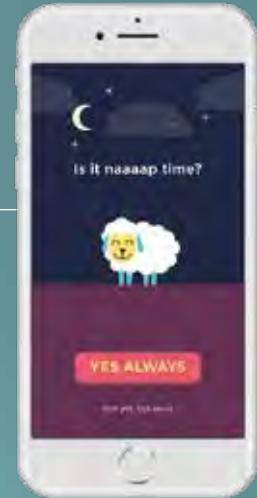
Work is all about 'pivoting' these days. In the 14 years since Patrick Stolk-Ramaker snagged his first advertising gig, the industry has changed dramatically. But he quickly evolved in parallel. Stolk-Ramaker started out as a traditional designer at agencies Smack and The Brand Factory. He later moved into online media, designing apps and websites at shops like Havas and Blackjet. He's currently a UX designer at FCB/Six, where he was a integral to designing the application for "Destination Pride."

ON BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN DESIGN AND UX.

"Experience design is a bridging of two roles. It's a design mindset, as well as a user experience mindset. I personally weigh heavier on the design side. I started my career as a print designer and then moved to digital. From there, I started working with information architects and user experience designers and was able to take the learnings from both worlds and bring them into one role, and attempt to elevate the experience everywhere."

ON THE EVOLVING ROLE THAT DATA PLAYS IN DESIGN.

"Data can be ugly. Data can be crude. So it's really design's role to use that data and put it across for the user in a compelling way. In the past, there were a lot of 'spray-and-pray' ads and now we're able to see ads become more relevant to a specific person online. It's kind of a split in the middle. So it's not that we're designing ads differently, it's that we're able to make use of things like dynamic headlines that change based on what users are looking for."



PERSONAL PROJECT: PRETTY APPS

"I strive to continue learning, and grow my skills in areas related to the work I do — from designing my own website to illustration and animation. A current design project that stands out would be Nappen, an app I co-created (along with talented information architect Anita Ko) to share what I've learned over the years of working in the industry. The app strives to help people take naps in the most efficient ways possible, supported by great design, user experience and useful info."

RANK

1

PATRICK STOLK-RAMAKER

RANK

2

OLEG PORTNOY

Oleg Portnoy's side hustles and education help him create strong design and branding work for top agency Cossette, where he worked on award-winning visuals for SickKids Foundation, McDonald's Canada and Canada Goose.

ON WORKING AS PART OF A TEAM ON BRANDING PROJECTS.

"When we start with a new client, there are periods when we work in silos and create an approach we feel works and present it to the clients. Then there are often workshops that happen. I think the best kind of work happens when everyone gets involved early on and develops the visual and conceptual approach in tandem – you collaborate earlier and then jam back-and-forth."

PERSONAL PROJECT: SMOKIN' DESIGN

"I try to bring my experience in visual arts (using different materials) into my design work. This image was made by carving a stamp out of a linoleum block, printed using letterpress inks and manipulated in Photoshop. I find the process opens up more interesting and unexpected design solutions."



RANK

3

COREY WAY

As a former AD at Cossette, Corey Way produced award-winning pieces for McDonald's and PepsiCo. A year ago, he jumped headfirst into new creative waters to become a CD at Abacus Agency. There, he's leading its new Creative Labs, where he designs ads tailor-made for social and mobile platforms.

ON GETTING YOUR AD NOTICED IN THE NEW (SOCIAL) WORLD ORDER.

"Design is more important in the Smartphone Age, because you have fractions of seconds to get people's attention and tell a message. You need hundreds and hundreds of pieces of social content, and design thinking is going to be the thing that scales up that creative need. While storytelling is still important, having that ability to express a message in seconds with just colour, type and shapes is super-important in the social world."

PERSONAL PROJECT: EXPRESSION VIA COLOUR

"Drawing gives you the ability to craft visual metaphors and strike emotions with just a pen and paper. While sketching, you can work through complex ideas and develop a totally unique style. In this illustration, I wanted to show loneliness/sadness by incorporating only a few 'happy' colours without relying heavily on expression."



Strategy's Creative Report Card tracks and tallies the awards taken home by agencies, brands, strategists and creatives over the past year to help the marketing community know who's at the top of their game.

We select a range of shows that incorporate a variety of media and assign every award a point value, weighted to recognize that international shows are bound to be tougher to win than regional ones.

As the books arrive throughout the awards season, we keep a database of wins for each advertiser, agency, CD, AD, CW, designer and planner, and add them up to determine a ranking in each category.

Please bear in mind it accounts for more than 1,500 individual awards and relies on the credits as published by the various shows. Therefore, there is room for error and/or omission.

SCORING

Point values are highest for international awards, followed by national and then regional. Best of Show and Grand Prix will receive more points than Gold, which receives more than Silver and so forth. We reserve the right to review and/or change the weight of awards each year based on their level of prestige and difficulty.

AGENCIES

The points for agency offices in multiple cities have been combined. However, distinct but affiliated agencies (with the same parent company) are listed separately, unless considered a single entity by the agency. If two different agencies are listed on a single campaign, each receives the same points.

INDIVIDUALS

Points are awarded to the individuals credited in the award show books as they appear. If a name isn't listed, the individual

doesn't receive any points. In some cases, agencies have provided corrections, which have been taken into account on a case-by-case basis. We have done our best to fix any discrepancies in spelling of names between various books.

ADVERTISERS

Points are awarded for the brands as listed in the awards annuals. Sub-brands or brand extensions are grouped together under the main brand.

THE AWARDS THAT COUNT

Regional: ACE, Ad Rodeo, Créa, ICE

National: ADCC, Applied Arts, AToMiC, CMA, Marketing, SIA Awards

International: Cannes, Clios, Communication Arts, D&AD, Epica, One Show

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2019

ATOMIC

BRANDED CONTENT WAS THE BIG WINNER THIS YEAR.

Well, next to the Canadian Paralympic Committee: it's actually the biggest winner of them all, having picked up the Grand Prix, alongside BBDO, for its "Paralympic Network."

Although, similar to the committee's campaign to bring Paralympic event footage to the masses, many of this year's AToMiC winners were rooted in sharing game-changing content.

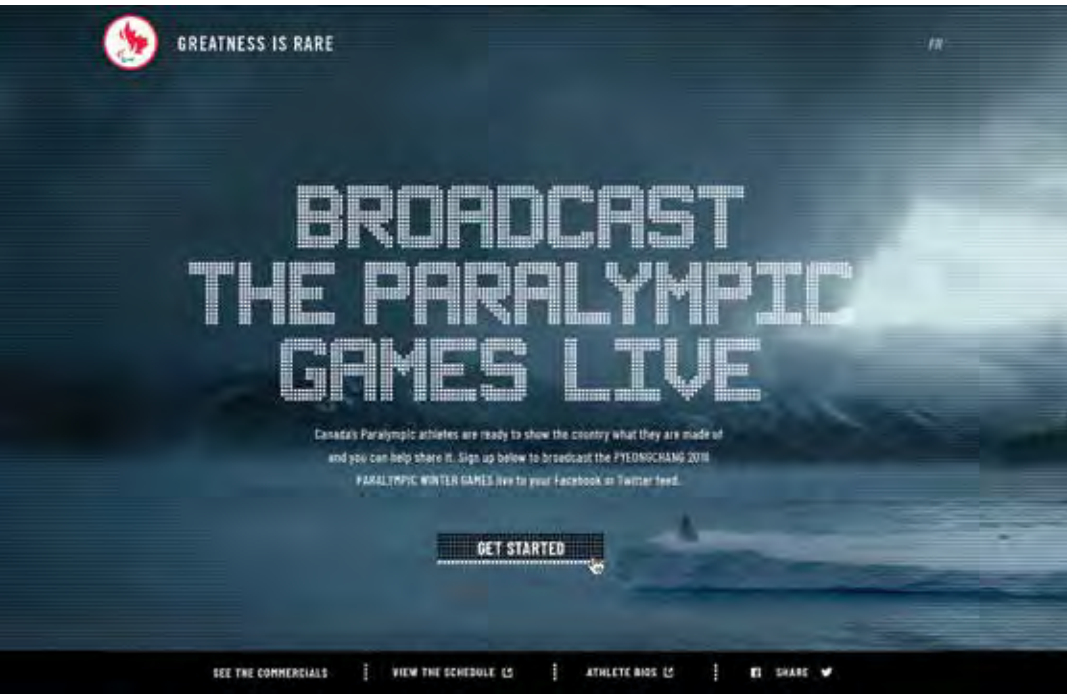
From long-form videos to documentaries and more, a host of brand winners showed that they've perfected the art of the moving picture.

Strategy developed the AToMiC Awards, in consultation with a pan-industry advisory board, to identify groundbreaking ideas and programs across Canada's mediascape. The winners, chosen by a jury of digital, TV, agency, marketing and media execs, offer innovative examples of how to engage audiences with fresh ideas, on multiple screens and in new environments.

The following stories are a highlight reel of ideas that challenge our expectations around advertising and the way we consume media.

Read on to learn about the best work from the past year.

BY JENNIFER HORN



< THE WINS

Canadian Paralympic Committee's "The Paralympic Network" by BBDO Toronto
Grand Prix; Gold Engagement; Gold Social; Gold Best Broadcast Engagement; Silver Idea; Silver ROI; Silver Digital Engagement; Bronze Niche Targeting; Bronze Tech Breakthrough



A fan-powered frenzy

Never underestimate the power of many.

Ambassadors, supporters and fans formed the backbone of several AToMiC-winning campaigns carrying a single mission: to call the world's attention to a just and noble cause.

The Grand Prix winner, the **Canadian Paralympic Committee**, placed world-class athletes on a mass pedestal with the help of a few thousand friends.

Paralympians are lionhearts. In the process of becoming the best of the best in their respective sport, they must overcome physical and societal adversity. Yet, their heroic achievements are often overlooked.

An unfortunate fact: only 10% of the Paralympic Games are broadcast by TV networks. So even if a person wanted to support these athletes, it wouldn't be easy, considering the games weren't available to watch. That's where "**The Paralympic Network**" comes in.

What's interesting about Paralympic fans is that they're not run-of-the-mill passive supporters, they're passionate fanatics. This observation by the organization and **BBDO**

led to a unique campaign and channel strategy, where the team converted fans into mini broadcasters to amp up coverage of the games.

It created the "Become a Broadcaster" tool on Facebook and Twitter. Anyone using the platform could select which games they wanted to watch/broadcast to their personal networks – all in advance of the actual event. The game was then automatically live-streamed to the fan's friends and family at the first whistle blown.

Setting up timers for content to be live-streamed was a unique idea. The commission gave people a new way to watch the underrated Games, succeeding in its mission by getting Canadians to broadcast over 22,000 events. That's more than 990,000 video views (or 15,843 hours), which equated to an astounding 11,464% increase in viewership compared to the previous Winter Games.

Clickvitism (supporting a cause through the click of a mouse) was also a part of the **States United to Prevent Gun Violence's** strategy.

While the organization's "**Backfire**" campaign used similar social broadcasting techniques to raise mass awareness, it was initially meant to pique the interest of one person: U.S. President Donald Trump.

Here's another unfortunate fact: every 16 minutes in America, someone is shot



and killed. Yet, President Trump continues to fight against gun laws. "**Backfire**" was created to help bring him to his senses with gun regulations, and required mass supporters for it to cause effect.

Working with **Rethink**, the organization collected real-time gun violence data from over 2,500 media, law enforcement, and government sources. That data was then translated into auto-tweets from Americans – including actor George Takei and Parkland

THE WINS >
 States United to Prevent Gun Violence
 "Backfire" by Rethink
Gold ROI;
Gold Global;
Bronze Digital Engagement



< THE WIN

Canadian Down Syndrome Society's "Anything But Sorry" by FCB Canada
Silver Shift; Silver Engagement; Bronze Social; Bronze Digital Engagement



< THE WINS

Montréal Little Italy's "Anyone but Sweden" by Rethink
Silver ROI; Bronze Engagement; Bronze Transmedia

survivor Lex Michael – all directed at the President's Twitter account. Advocates can tweet daily or weekly, and the crowdsourced campaign is still driving sign-ups, spreading the reality of gun violence to Trump and the entire Twittersphere with 93,000-plus tweets and 17 million impressions, on average, per day.

Mobilizing people online to bring awareness (and change) to erroneous public opinion was the M.O. behind the "Anything But Sorry" campaign, created by FCB for the Canadian Down Syndrome Society.

Last year alone, 9,363 babies were born with Down syndrome, but many of those births were not celebrated. Because when a baby with Down syndrome is born, the first words parents often hear are "I'm sorry."

Avoiding clichés about empowering people with disabilities, the organization used humour to trigger a shift in thinking. It first created "The S-Word" video, which debunked Down syndrome stereotypes. Then, docu-stories of Down syndrome families were produced, alongside "S-Warnings" that ran before the top 30 YouTube videos containing the word "Sorry."

All of the content led to a digital hub (the crux of the campaign's latest iteration),

where people could become ambassadors to spread the word. Via the website, people were invited to share colourful welcome cards that were "Anything But Sorry."

More than 64,000 e-cards, videos and news stories were shared, bringing in 330% more donations to the CDSS in the end.

Moving offline, the "Anyone But Sweden" campaign, also led by Rethink, for Montreal's Little Italy neighbourhood, kept the fan movement going.

Faced with the news that the Italian soccer team failed to qualify for the FIFA World Cup (the first time in 60 years), Little Italy needed an idea that would draw crowds to its cafés, bars and restaurants, or risk a massive hit to the local business community.

Fans' beloved Italian team had lost to Sweden, so naturally Little Italy put a hit on the nation. It created a side event around the main sporting event (despite the team's absence), calling on Montrealers to watch and support every team but Sweden.

It's small budget went far, with the neighbourhood creating online content, print ads and promotional material that rallied fans to play favouritism – and generated millions of impressions that boosted local business sales.

LISTENING IS BELIEVING

It's easy to switch off and disengage from a static visual that simply requires passive attention. But tactile experiences drive empathy. And, as a result, provoke participants to confront their own prejudice.

The Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba set out to educate Canadians on what it's like to live with the disorder, particularly when they've lost the support they rely on.

Tyson Sylvester is a young man with disabilities who is fighting to get back the social services that were taken away after graduating high school. UpHouse filmed Tyson making the issue public for the first time when he locked himself in a jail cell in Winnipeg's busy Old Market Square.

Though visually discomfiting, people were

THE WINS >

The Cerebral Palsy Association of Manitoba's "Locked out of Life" by UpHouse
Bronze Diversity; Bronze Experiential Engagement



< THE WINS

Interval House's "The Broken Bride Registry" by Union
Bronze Idea; Bronze Experiential Engagement

encouraged to walk up to the jail cell and listen to a recording of Tyson telling his story.

The "Locked Out of Life" video reached more than 150,000 people on Facebook and over 2,100 people have signed a petition demanding better services for adults with physical disabilities in the province.

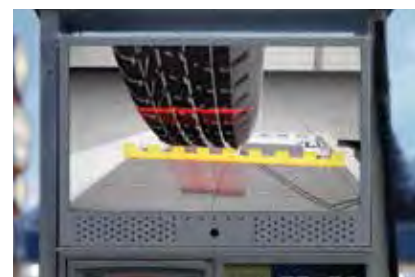
Like issues around disabilities, domestic abuse is often not spoken about. Interval House and Union brought the fact that abuse often begins at the start of a marriage to life via the "Broken Bride Registry." It was like any regular wedding registry, but featured items like "Jealous Rage Bandages," "Cigarette Burn Cream," and the "Don't Talk Back Arm Sling." The items were displayed in a booth at Canada's largest bridal show, where people could pick up a registry scanner and listen to real stories of abuse.

People could add Interval House to their actual bridal registry, so the organisation anticipates a significant spike in donations come next wedding season.



< THE WINS

The Bank of Montreal's
"The BMO200
Fountain" by Mosaic
Bronze Experiential
Engagement



^ THE WINS

Fountain Tire's "Safest Highway" by FCB Canada
Silver Engagement; Bronze Print/OOH

The reality of tech

Technology is a problem-solver, time-saver and altogether life-enhancer. And yes, it can help save lives and give back, too. The **Bank of Montreal** and **Fountain Tire** tapped into these qualities, bridging the physical and digital worlds for the greater good.

Travelling between Toronto, Montreal and Chicago, the "**BMO200 Fountain**" for the bank's bicentennial was more than a "phygital" installation, pop-up or stunt. It was a rare example of an omnichannel

campaign led by a branded experience, and it lasted an entire year.

When celebrating a birthday, wishes tend to be inherently selfish. **BMO** and **Mosaic** turned this truth on its head, inviting Canadians to use its 17-foot interactive sculpture to "wish it forward." Anyone could connect their mobile device to the fountain and "toss" a digital coin with a wish for the bank to fulfill, big or small. For example, BMO granted the wish for an artist to have

her first art gallery, hosted concerts for the deaf community, and also donated funds to medical research.

While the concept took two years to sell through, the team engineered and built the fountain (including a VR version) in six months. Well worth the effort, the "**BMO200 Fountain**" garnered more than nine million impressions, with over 250,000 unique in-person interactions and awareness of the anniversary jumping 45%.

While the bank was off changing lives, **Fountain Tire** used tech to help save lives. Worn tires contribute to a quarter of all accidents. So the retailer set out to fix unsafe tires and tackle road conditions with its "**Safest Highway**" campaign by **FCB**.

Data was central to the program. The team first used regional collision data to ID the most dangerous road in Alberta. Next, data was collected from a mat that commuters drove over at a gas station, taking a 3D-mapped sample of their tires to assess if they were safe or not.

A Fountain Tire rep gave every driver a customized tire safety report (31% of tires failed, which it replaced, free of charge). And the final data points were collected from Waze, Twitter and The Weather Network, with changing road and weather conditions displayed on digital boards along the highway in real-time.

In the end, tire sales for the brand increased 8% locally and 4% nationally, all while helping drivers stay safe.



< THE WINS

Le Club
AccorHotels'
"Seeker" by
Cossette
Bronze Immersive
Reality;
Bronze Tech
Breakthrough



^ THE WINS

Les Producteurs de lait du Québec's
"Singing Cartons" by Lg2
Silver Immersive Reality

GETTING IMMERSIVE

Immersive tech can be as complex as tracking facial gestures for a luxe travel experience... or as simple as adding facial features to a standard milk carton.

"**Seeker**," the world's first biometric discovery tool for destination planning was created by **Cossette** for **Le Club AccorHotels**. Luxury is all about understanding a guest's desires, even before they do. So the idea was to read customers' minds.

"Seeker" recorded and analyzed emotional responses via headsets and pulse-readers at a live event with influencers and supermodels. It used the biometric data to create a report on people's true travel desires and made visualizations of their brain activity and reactions. The experience was filmed and used to promote the online version of Seeker, generating 12 million impressions from travel industry press and tech media.

Taking immersive reality into the aisles to prompt more immediate purchases the **Milk Producers of Quebec** and **Lg2** used augmented reality to grow love for dairy. It developed a peculiar app that made milk cartons sing traditional Christmas songs. The "**Singing Cartons**" app could detect up to five cartons in a home fridge, on store shelves and even street billboards, with the boxes turning into a festive choir.

Innovate to integrate

These ads were brought to you by two imaginative brands. Both **SickKids** and **Wendy's** created AToMiC-winning campaigns that steered clear of your garden variety sponsored ad or product integration.

For the children's hospital foundation, the simple (and almost expected) approach for a corporate fundraising campaign would have been to ask brands to simply become a contributing partner. Instead, SickKids took a more creative slant, asking big name brands to literally donate their radio airtime to a campaign of the same name.

An "**Airtime**" website, created by **Cossette**, gave companies a choice: they could make a cash donation to the foundation, or they could donate a portion of their radio advertising to spread the word about the research SickKids is doing to fight Cystic Fibrosis (CF). (The campaign's play on "air" was deliberate, as the fatal genetic disease robs Canadian youth and young adults of the oxygen they need to breathe.)

Hasbro, Telus, Mercedes and McDonald's all gave up their airtime, and the team created four custom radio ads, each showcasing the brand partner and read by a different SickKids patient.

During CF Month, the spots were heard over 275 times and generated one million impressions.

Another clever brand insertion took place in the *Big Brother Canada* house when Wendy's and **Initiative** built a first-ever permanent walk-thru structure for houseguests of the show to interact with. Contestants were rewarded with Wendy's meals when they won challenges, and deprived of them when they lost.

Working with Corus, the team produced custom integrations, from a Wendy's window that lived as a branded backdrop for the full season, to "House Tasks" that rewarded winners with its meals.

Houseguests naturally become brand ambassadors. They used the reward meal as leverage when making deals during competitions and gave numerous testimonials for the Wendy's brand and products throughout the sixth season of the show.

And fans followed suit. They too developed their own show-watching ritual of ordering Wendy's and sharing their meals during each episode's airing.



^ **THE WIN:**
SickKids Foundation's
"Airtime" by Cossette
Bronze Collaboration



v **THE WIN:**
Wendy's Restaurants
of Canada "Bringing
Wendy's Home" by
Initiative
**Silver Brand
Integration**



THE WINS:

Uber Canada/
MADD's
"Motherhood" &
"Uber Moms" by
Zulu Alpha Kilo
Silver Cause &
Action; Silver
Collaboration;
Silver Experiential
Engagement



THE WIN:
Fenplast's
"Metalproof"
by Lg2
Silver Online Video



The brand (content) bandwagon

THE WINS:

Harley-Davidson's
"Common Ground"
by Initiative/Zulu
Alpha Kilo
Silver Brand
Content; Bronze
Online Video

UBER/MADD

People have become desensitized to ads around impaired driving. Many don't want to hear about the personal risks. So the idea behind the joint **Uber** and **MADD** content piece was to instead focus on the loss of motherhood. **Zulu Alpha Kilo** found Shelly, an Uber driver who had lost her daughter to impaired driving. The team rode along with her one night as she picked people up at local bars, filming her sharing her story. People could donate \$1 to MADD each time Uber's "Compliment" badge was used.

HARLEY-DAVIDSON

Harley-Davidson was thought of as an aging brand. To give it a youthful jolt, and bring new Harley-riding enthusiasts into the family, it created rich narratives in a series that demonstrated Canadian adventure and

camaraderie. Three episodic videos were created by **Zulu Alpha Kilo** and targeted to those with an affinity toward motorcycles. Working with **Initiative**, the team pitched the episodes to Bell Media, where they were repackaged as a doc for Discovery. It also aired branded pieces leading into the channel's programming for up to six hours.

FENPLAST

Fenplast is a Canadian door and window manufacturer. Its specialty is soundproofing. The brand wanted to remind homeowners that silence is something to be considered when choosing a window. What better way to tell people about its effectiveness than to demonstrate it? During a heavy-metal festival, Fenplast and **Lg2** set up a room made entirely of the soundproofed windows. The team put babies inside and filmed them

sleeping peacefully to showcase the power of the product. Within the first few days, the content piece generated 117,000 views.

SKITTLES

Skittles and **DDB** wanted to give Gen Z a reason to give a damn about Canada Day (an event that's met with apathy among the demo), by letting them "**#GIVEaDAM.**" It turned the iconic beaver into an ironic Canadian Beaver-man and had him build a dam in real-time. Then, on Canada Day, the 4.5-hour stream of a Beaver-man building a dam beside a stream went live. For every view, Skittles gave money to the David Suzuki Foundation for actual beaver dams, plus 800,000 teens watched on the day.



THE WIN:
Tabasco's "One-Star Restaurant" by Rethink
Bronze Brand Content

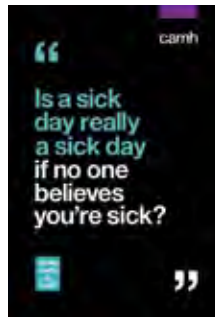
THE WIN:
SickKids Foundation's "Milk & Cookies" by Cossette
Bronze ROI



THE WIN:
Mars Wrigley Confectionary's "Skittles #GIVEaDAM" by DDB Canada
Silver Brand Content

TABASCO

Tabasco was created to awaken and elevate flavours. But that's difficult to convey using just words. So the brand decided to demonstrate the sauce's flavour-enhancing power with the **"One-Star Restaurant"** and film. Working with **Rethink**, the brand documented Chef John Mike Leblond as he turned the worst-rated takeout food into four-star dishes using only a few drops of Tabasco. The meals were then served at L'Étoile, with the pop-up selling out fast. The experience was turned into a two-minute social spot and seeded out by food bloggers.



THE WINS:
CAMH's "Mental Health is Health" by Zulu Alpha Kilo
Silver Brand Content



THE WINS:
Casey House's "Break Bread Smash Stigma" by Bensimon Byrne / Narrative / OneMethod
Silver Diversity; Bronze Brand Content

SICKKIDS

During the holidays, patients at **SickKids** worry that Santa won't be able to find them at the hospital. This heart-breaking insight drove the strategy behind the **"Milk & Cookies"** content piece, which included a giant glass of milk and cookie that acted as a beacon for Santa. The **Cossette** team filmed the food being created by SickKids' staff, and then placed on the hospital's rooftop. The Toronto Maple Leafs also created their own "Milk & Cookies" video, which aired in-arena and online. All of the content pushed to the "SickKids Get Better Gifts" program, with the campaign generating 20% more donations than last year.

CAMH

The majority of Canadians don't believe that mental health is as important as physical health. This insight led to the **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's (CAMH) "Mental Health is Health"** content series that questioned why society treats mental and physical health so differently. A series of videos by **Zulu** featured real stories. One woman shared how she received less support for her mental illness than for her bouts with cancer, while retired NHLer Corey Hirsch opened up about his own debilitating struggles. #MentalHealthIsHealth has since been used 11,000 times, generating 30 million earned impressions and increasing online donations to CAMH by 41%.

CASEY HOUSE

In November 2017, **Casey House** launched the world's first HIV-positive restaurant and called it June's HIV+ Eatery. The name of the eatery was an homage to the founder of Casey House, June Callwood. The pop-up was designed to put HIV stigma in the spotlight and generate social conversation. It did just that: one billion impressions were generated. To keep the conversation going, Casey House created a film that profiled the sometimes sad, but often uplifting stories of the HIV-positive chefs. The film premiered in front of 500 patients, donors, media, and influencers. It also caught the attention of HBO, with the network acquiring the rights to air the documentary in 2018.



Starting afresh with different insights

THE WIN:
Johnson &
Johnson/Motrin
"Tina's Uterus" by
OneMethod
Gold Shift

Lifetime brand loyalty is a real hurdle for upstarts and underdogs who go head-to-head with heritage players. Many stick by the same bank that opened their first account; and they reach for the same painkiller their parents once stocked in their childhood home. Desperate times call for unorthodox measures, like when lesser-known brands **Koho** and **Motrin** created content that went outside traditional category lines.

In late 2018, Motrin was on the verge of being delisted. It had a mere 3.5% market share and a pretty painful business outlook. Most big painkiller brands focus on performance, not Motrin. To gain share, the brand decided to speak to a new audience (millennials) via an old pain point (menstrual cramps).

Women are often quite frank about menstrual pain. Considering how skeptical young women are about advertising, Motrin had to speak their language, which it did via "**Tina's Uterus**."

TV and online spots, by **OneMethod**, portrayed employees coming up with ideas for Tina's menstrual pain, before a siren interrupts to indicate that Motrin had been ingested and relief was imminent.

The spots were shared by women tagging their friends and commenting on the authentic approach, leading to a 480% increase in awareness and more than doubling purchase intent. As a result, Motrin is no longer being delisted, with "Tina's Uterus" literally saving the brand.



SUSTAINABLE SHIFTS

Hurting your business to follow through on a promise – that's commitment.

IKEA and **Greenfield Natural Meat Co.** have goals to become sustainable brands, and they're not afraid to lose money in the process.

First, IKEA wanted to demonstrate its commitment to sustainability by bringing global attention to the issue around the planet's rising temperatures. Despite dire warnings, the world is still slow to act. So the retailer set up a simple experiment to demonstrate what climate change would feel like in 2025 (when temperatures are expected to rise four degrees).

IKEA and **Rethink** turned down the air conditioning system inside one of its stores and the temperature quickly rose to predicted levels. It didn't take long for customers to feel the effects of climate change first-hand, with the experience filmed and then shared on social.

As a result of the experiment, visitor numbers declined, sales were well below target, and the number of people who stayed to purchase something from IKEA was down 10%. Sentiment for IKEA, however, was overwhelmingly positive, with people commending the experiment and the brand's

THE WIN: IKEA's "Climate Change Effect" by Rethink **Gold Cause & Action**





THE WIN:
Koho's "Dream Thieves" by Cossette
Gold IP

For Koho's launch in Canada, awareness was critical. With over 50% of consumers sticking with the same bank for more than half their lives, the startup needed to get attention. The idea was to wake people up to the reality that the current banking system benefits the banks, not them. So the brand and **Cossette** produced a 13-minute spot called "**Dream Thieves**." The commercial-cum-film tells the (fictitious) story of how banks sneak into homes at night, literally harvesting people's dreams.

The strategy centred around creating compelling content that people would seek out and share. To date, the video has received over 1.3 million completed views, all of which was generated with zero traditional media spend.

THE WINS:
Greenfield Natural Meat Co.'s "Meatless Monday" by Havas Canada
Silver Shift; Bronze Cause & Action

efforts to become a sustainable brand. Greenfield also took a bold step and asked people to stop eating meat, even if it risked their bottom line. With consumption rates of meat at an all-time high, the "**Meatless Monday**" campaign set out to

convince consumers to eat more sustainable meat, but also to eat less meat in general.

The campaign launched with a video that outlined the benefits of going "meatless," and asked people to take the pledge. It also drove consumers to a microsite where they could find statistics, along with meatless recipes. In all, the brand generated more than 100 million media impressions and saw a 434% jump in brand affinity.

OLD BRANDS, NEW TRICKS

Often perceived as old-fashioned and traditional, **KFC** needed a buzz-worthy campaign to increase online engagement. With a shoestring budget of only \$15,000, the campaign needed to work hard in order to break through.

For the last few years, people have been interested in Bitcoin. But where do they spend it all? Marrying crispy fried chicken with the digital cryptocurrency, KFC and **Grip** began to sell buckets for Bitcoin as part of a unique campaign. A Facebook Live tracker showed the standing price for the KFC bucket of chicken, which fluctuated in price along with that of Bitcoin.

Fans went nuts, creating crypto-chicken memes and interacting with KFC through social comments. The brand earned 6.6 billion media impressions, receiving coverage from over 200 media outlets.

THE WIN:
KFC's "Bitcoin Bucket" by Grip Limited
Gold Social



THE WIN:
The Terry Fox Foundation's "Millions of Followers" by Grip Limited
Bronze Shift

Not only that. It sold out of Bitcoin Buckets, every single day. And in just two weeks, KFC went from 'old-fashioned' to being on the cusp of the future of digital transactions.

The Terry Fox Foundation had its own perception challenges: it too needed to convince younger Canadians about the importance of the cause that Terry Fox fought for – and how it continues to live on today.

Grip modernized the organization's message by taking archived footage of Fox during his famous marathon run, and combined it with a crowd cheering his name and the message, "0 Likes. 0 Posts. 0 Shares. Millions of Followers" – which acted as commentary on our social-media obsessed world.

The campaign also extended into a Canada-first collaboration with Square Technology, where people could tap their credit or debit card to donate to cancer via a digital board in Toronto.

The spot blew up, receiving over 48,000 likes, 16,000 shares, and 6.3 million impressions. And, most importantly, year-over-year online donations were up 45%.

THE WIN: McDonald's "Follow the Arches" by Cossette
Gold Design; Gold Print/OOH; Silver AToMiC Idea



THE WINS:
Gender Creative Kids
Canada's "The You
Inside Project" by Lg2
Gold Design; Gold
AToMiC Diversity;
Silver AToMiC Idea



THE WIN:
Ottawa Tourism's "Not
Vanilla" by Rethink
Bronze Design

THE WIN:
The Workplace Safety and
Insurance Board of Ontario's
"Typefaces of the Fallen" by Grey
Canada
Bronze Design



The art of design

WAY-FINDING BY DESIGN

No two **McDonald's** way-finding billboards looked the same and many had weathered considerably. The design challenge for **Cossette** was to transform the OOH boards to be as recognizable as the brand's Golden Arches. The answer lay in using those famous yellow arches. The "**Follow the Arches**" boards displayed short copy that told people McDonald's could be found "On Your Left," "On Your Right," at the "Next Exit," or that they "Just Missed Us."

GET INSIDE

Trans youth still struggle with acceptance and understanding, especially at school. Advocacy group **Gender Creative Kids** and **Lg2** needed to stop transphobia before it begins. So it created Sam. The toy –

which is based on Russian nesting dolls – was designed to help youth understand what it's like to grow up transgender. The "**You Inside Project**" colour palette and facial expressions of the dolls' convey different emotions at each stage, allowing children to understand what Sam is feeling at each step, and why.

NOT SUCH A BORE NOW

Many Canadians see Ottawa as "vanilla." To change perceptions for **Tourism Ottawa**, **Rethink** decided to break the mould of tourism advertising and launched a brand of ice cream: **Not Vanilla**. The team created five flavours that represented some of the experiences Ottawa has to offer, like "Rideauculous," which was inspired by the Rideau Canal. The packaging also worked

to counter misconceptions. Plain, white and boring on the outside, each box of ice cream actually contained colourful designs inside – showing that a world of excitement can live just below the surface, if you're willing to discover it.

SAFETY FIRST

Workplace safety signs are a legal requirement at job sites in Canada. However, many are seemingly disregarded. So the **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board** and **Grey** redesigned them to be unignorable. Working with the families of deceased workers, they crafted a typeface that memorialized workers who had died on the job. Each letter was inspired by the likeness of a fallen worker and told their story. The typeface was then used

THE WIN:
Raising the Roof's
"More Than a
Toque" by Leo
Burnett Toronto
Silver Design



THE WIN:
Fondation
Émergence's "The
Pride Shield" by
Rethink
Silver Online Video;
Bronze Idea



THE WIN:
Just Tom's "Website on Vinyl" by The Local Collective
Bronze Audio Branding



THE WIN:
"Molson
Salutes the
Dépanneurs" by
Sid Lee
Bronze ROI

to recreate common workplace safety signs and placed close to potential hazards, giving workers a more powerful reason to rethink safety.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Many Canadians don't believe homelessness can be solved. Many are pessimistic, so the challenge for **Raising the Roof** and **Leo Burnett** was to get them to see the organization's fundraising toques not as ordinary hats, but as symbols of homelessness prevention. So the team designed new packaging for the toques. Four different transparent wrappers were overlaid with graphics that demonstrated how donations contribute to preventing homelessness. The wrappers depicted a shower, a meal, education and even a home – the things that their donations contribute to.

FOR THE RECORD

With over 30 years in business, audio production facility **Just Tom** decided to introduce itself to a new generation of agency creatives. Knowing that they're often inundated with cold calls and meeting

requests, breaking into the "inner circle" can often be a challenging task. Most agency creatives are audiophiles, and as an audio company, playing in this space was a natural fit. So, working with **The Local Collective**, it created a "Website on Vinyl" where all of the company's information on its site was recorded, pressed and printed as a record. The "About," "Work" and "Contact Us" sections were read aloud by president Tom Thorney, complete with background music.

TO THE GOOD 'OL DAYS

Dépanneurs (Quebec's version of a convenience store) are often neglected. To enhance Montreal's urban landscape and celebrate its cultural heritage, **Molson** returned to its Export's glory days. Working with **Sid Lee**, it developed unique branded identities for 25 storefronts, all inspired by the vintage look of the stubby bottle. Custom-made shop signs were created for each point-of-sale, and the buildings themselves were refurbished with. The team also created visuals that paid homage to the '70s "blue collar" aesthetics, style and

architecture of Molson Export's heyday. Locals responded by buying more Export stubbies after the dramatic makeovers of their city's beloved dépanneurs.

STANDING TOGETHER

Fondation Émergence wanted to promote the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia with something a little more ambitious than ads. Many people in developed countries tend to forget that the LGBTQ+ community still faces violence and discrimination. Working with **Rethink**, the non-profit used the pride flag to create a "Pride Shield" art piece that highlighted the power of standing up against homophobia and transphobia together. The team aligned 193 (the number of UN member countries) flags on wires and shot through them with a .45 calibre bullet, travelling at 9,000 feet per second in a 400-yard warehouse. The Flag eventually stopped the bullet Museums are looking to exhibit the installation in 2019 and the shield will soon travel the world, raising awareness about the plight of the LGBTQ+ community.



Golden Arches from “M” to “W” across 100 female-owned locations.

It all took place on March 8, International Women's Day, when roadside marquees, signage, digital menu boards, packaging, crew uniforms, and even McDonald's digital and social channels showcased “**The Flip.**” The campaign, by DDB, also highlighted stories from some of the female figures at the company in a doc-style film and the brand tracked 1.6 billion global impressions.

Closer to home in Toronto, **Uniqlo** looked to build relevance with “**The Welcome Store,**” a pop-up that tested Canadians reputation for being generous and inclusive. Having just arrived in Canada, Uniqlo wanted to see if the

nation was made up of people who would give someone (in this case, an immigrant) the shirt off their back. The fashion retailer focused on one of its most popular garments (and Canada's unofficial uniform), a flannel shirt. Working with **Rethink**, the brand opened a completely empty store, and left Canadians to fill it up. Every visitor received a Uniqlo flannel shirt and one choice: they could keep the shirt, or hang it up on the wall for a new Canadian.

An impressive 97% of visitors decided to give up their shirt to be donated to a new immigrant, an experience that was filmed for a video online. Flannel shirts were also sent to local influencers, which helped add to the campaign's tally of 14 million impressions and 1.4 million video views.

And when **Whirlpool** wanted to show how it helps families and multicultural communities thrive, the brand looked to tell the story of a Sama, the daughter of a Syrian refugee family.

Research showed that many Canadians were committing

extraordinary acts of care to welcome Syrian refugees fleeing from conflict. So the brand worked with **Zulu Alpha Kilo** to create a documentary that tapped into all the positive things Canadians were doing to help refugees by showing Sama and her mother returning the favour by preparing traditional Syrian lunches for her classmates. Targeting young parents, the “**Sama's Lunchbox**” made the connection between sharing home-cooked meals (which were made using Whirlpool appliances) and a broader sense of community. The film tracked more than 2.7 million views, and people who saw the video said they were 12% more likely to perceive Whirlpool as “providing the best care.”

When diversity and advertising collide

THE WINS:

Top Left: McDonald's “The Flip” by DDB
Gold AToMiC Diversity; Bronze Engagement

Top: Uniqlo's “The Welcome Store” by Rethink
Bronze Diversity; Bronze Experiential Engagement

Bottom: Whirlpool's “Sama's Lunchbox” by Zulu Alpha Kilo
Bronze Online Video

Right: PFLAG Canada's “Destination Pride” by FCB/Six
Gold Diversity; Gold AToMiC Engagement; Gold AToMiC Idea; Silver AToMiC Social; Silver Best Digital Engagement; Bronze Tech

The case for equality and inclusiveness has long been made. A diverse business is good for business. Marketers at **McDonald's**, **Uniqlo** and **Whirlpool** have caught onto this, running inclusive campaigns that foster a sense of belonging for both American women and Canadian minorities.

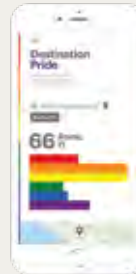
In the U.S., men are 30% more likely to be promoted to managerial positions. At McDonald's, however, 60% of U.S. managers are women. The statistic speaks volumes about the progressiveness of the company, which it set out to demonstrate in the public eye with a campaign that flipped the iconic McDonald's

AN ALL-INCLUSIVE TOOL

The Pride flag has always been a symbol of safety and openness. But the truth is that not everyone is fortunate enough to feel welcome in a country. The global LGBTQ+ community struggles for equality plays out across a country's laws, rights and cultural landscape. What's legal in one place is punishable somewhere else.

PFLAG Canada wanted people to see the world as it is. So it worked with **FCB/Six** to create “**Destination Pride,**” a data-driven platform that helps LGBTQ+ travellers navigate the world using a simple bar graph of the iconic flag.

A hyper-targeted approach drove users to the site from 156 of the world's 195 countries. Destination Pride was the most shared and discussed communications platform in PFLAG's history, with the data visualizations even being invited to hang in London's Design Museum.



Get out-of-home

The pithy Bill Bernbach once said, “Nobody counts the number of ads you run; they just remember the impression you make.” While only one subway station was cloaked in **Netflix’s “Castle, Frank”** ads, and only one billboard was affixed with a **St. Louis Children’s Hospital’s “Remission Bell,”** these two OOH stunts galvanized a big impression: earned media.

Nowhere else in the world is there a Castle Frank station, except in Toronto. Its moniker was a fortuitous find for the team at **Proof** when it was brainstorming a compelling tie into **Marvel’s The Punisher**, a new Netflix show about a Marine vet — Frank Castle — who becomes a vigilante out to avenge the murder of his family. The TTC station became the hub for a sweeping out-of-home takeover-cum-manhunt.

The agency blended the already-existing fandom (the series is based on a popular comic book) with what audiences would see in the new TV series. It worked with the global Netflix team to align on every detail, creating “wanted” posters rooted in the visual identity of the upcoming show. Proof then collaborated with Mediabrands, the TTC and Pattison Advertising to place the OOH ads, which revolved around a search for the vigilante.

The campaign went beyond simply reaching commuters as “Castle, Frank” was received with gusto by fans. People were surprised by the serendipitous link, and jumped at the chance to share selfies and photos of the ads online, resulting in over 1.5 million social impressions.

From subway-takers to highway-drivers, the St. Louis Children’s Hospital set out to rally people behind a different hero narrative, that of cancer-beating children.

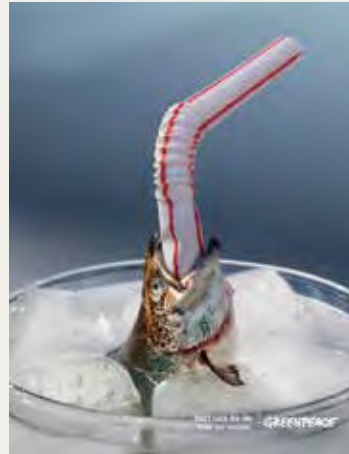
A new wing of the hospital, called “Siteman Kids,” was erected as a dedication

THE WINS:

Left: Netflix and Marvel’s “The Punisher - Castle Frank” by Proof Silver Print/OOH

Middle: St. Louis Children’s Hospital’s “Remission Bell” by J. Walter Thompson Canada Bronze Idea; Bronze Print/OOH

Top: Greenpeace’s “Stop Sucking” by Rethink Bronze Print/OOH



OOH THAT DOESN'T SUCK (KINDA)

One of the largest contributors to the overuse of plastic is the plastic straw. They’re everywhere, they’re single use, and they’re killing life in the oceans. Greenpeace wanted to take a stand and boldly pronounce that it was time to end the use of plastic straws with a provocative ad campaign. Rethink created a series of “Stop Sucking” images to powerfully articulate the realities of plastic straw waste. Fish and other

marine life were depicted in a glass with a straw brutally inserted into their mouths. Because of the visual nature of the ads Greenpeace was able to run the campaign in print and out-of-home, with each translated into dozens of languages to be used around the world. The images have been used as one of the main visual drivers in many European countries’ environmental campaigns pushing for greater policies and elimination of single-use plastics.



to kids fighting cancer. In the hospital wing, there is a special ritual that occurs when a patient is done with their chemotherapy treatment. Family, nurses, and doctors gather to watch these brave kids ring a golden bell as a symbolic end to a difficult time in their life. The ceremony, however, only happens within the walls of the hospital.

The idea, brought to the hospital by **J. Walter Thompson**, was to create a giant bell, attach it to a billboard and have it ring

out loud every time a child beat cancer so that all of St. Louis could hear.

The oversized replica of the hospital’s bell was fitted with a wireless device that connected to an app, allowing the team to trigger the ringing of the bell at the same time as the kids in the hospital.

It generated enough global coverage to drive a total of 390 million earned impressions worth more than \$3 million.



Creative confectionary

THE WINS:

Top: The Hershey Company's "Oh Henry! 4:25" by Anomaly
Gold Idea; Gold Best Experiential Engagement

Top: Mars Wrigley Confectionary's "Snickers Hater Bar" by BBDO Toronto
Silver Engagement; Silver Niche Targeting

Right: Central Station's "Grass Roots" by Central Station
Bronze Cannabis Branding

Right: Canopy Growth / Tweed's "Hi." by Cossette
Silver Cannabis Branding

The consumer war against sugar is on, and one way for confectionary brands to battle it out is to get creative with their product.

Oh Henry! broke through by concocting entirely-new chocolate that appeals to Canadians with the munchies, while **Snickers** repackaged already-existing bars with a (creepy) personal touch.

Looking to reach a younger generation, both brands fought for the title of Canada's "hunger bar" through millennial pastimes, like smoking cannabis or watching basketball.

There was no bar on shelves that specifically addressed cannabis-induced hunger. So, naturally, Oh Henry! created a chocolate formulated to feed the intense hunger that typically hits five minutes after 4:20. It called the bar, **Oh Henry! 4:25**.

Packaging was changed from the brand's trademark yellow to a new green with the help of **Anomaly**. Cannabis slang was also added to the packaging and to launch the bar ahead of its national rollout, the brand gave out samples at a branded dispensary in Toronto's Kensington Market. One million bars sold out across Canada before the campaign even came to a close.

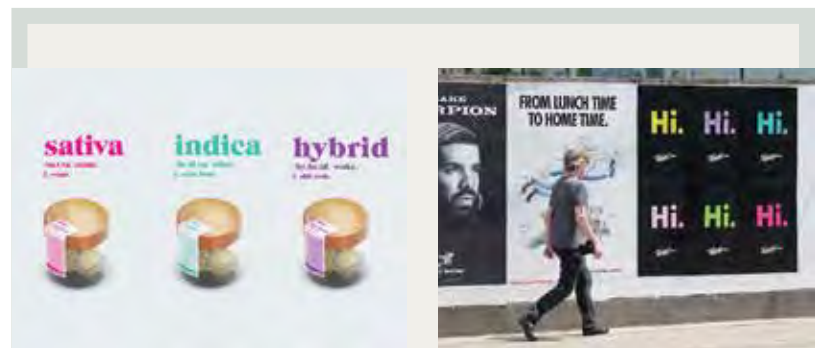
As for Snickers, it took to Twitter to get certain "**Haters**" to become lovers of its bar.

Despite the Toronto Raptors achieving its best season ever, many fans began to express doubt as the team entered the playoffs. As a partner of the Raptors, Snickers decided to connect this love/hate

behaviour to its long-term "You're not you when you're hungry" platform.

Twitter had become the epicenter of basketball commentary, and so the idea was to call out Raptors "haters" on the social platform and make them eat their words.

The brand worked with **BBDO** and sent people real Snickers bars with their tweets printed on the packaging. It also posted a picture of the bar and tagged the fan on Twitter, accompanied by a message telling them "You're a hater when you're hungry."



CANNABIS 101

When recreational marijuana became legal in Canada last fall, two pot brands strategically, ahem, cleared the air about cannabis as a way to stand out in a crowded space. **Central Station's "Grass Roots"** introduction kit served to mellow out first-time smokers' anxieties about the popular pastime. The kit explained the difference between strains and educated users on accessories. And when **Canopy Growth** introduced its **Tweed** brand to Canadians before legalization, it too opted for an educational approach, working with Cossette to create the "**Hi.**" campaign. Due to strict advertising rules, the team got creative by producing searchable educational content that was placed on a dedicated website. The campaigns sparked interest for both burgeoning brands aiming to compete in the still-evolving industry.

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TOP SHOPS

Production
partners evolve
to meet new
brand demands

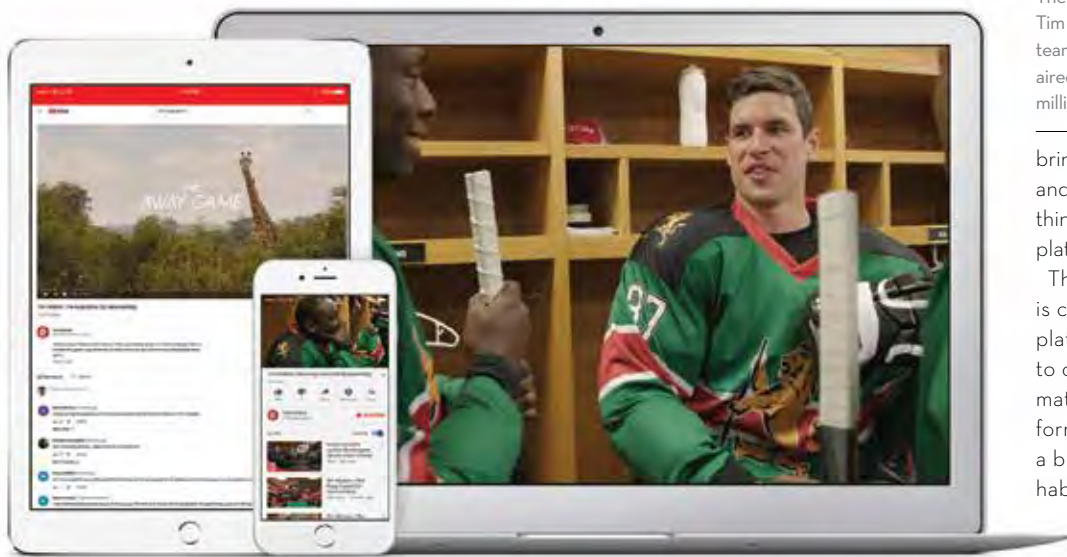
With a bevy of social channels to feed, and a finite slice of consumers' attention up for grabs, if there's one clear trend facing the industry in 2019, it's that brands' demand for lots of high-quality content isn't likely to abate anytime soon.

One study by research firm Polar predicts that content marketing will near \$14 billion by 2020, almost doubling the \$7 billion 2018 spend.

But with more content needs come more demands on resources so forward-thinking partners are stepping up to to help brands and agencies manage the challenge.

Some, like Zulubot and King Ursa are putting strategy and analytics at the heart of the production process. Others, like Unified Content have gone agile to help clients with the volume shift required. And some, like Array of Stars, are branching into new territories, such as live events, to help round out the range of offerings.

Whether brands are looking for a partner who can do it all or want specific skills to meet their content needs, the new breed of production partners are evolving their models to make it work for the new market reality.



The "Away Game", a three-minute content piece for Tim Hortons quickly became a viral hit. The Zulubot team also edited together a 17-minute doc that aired on Sportsnet. The content racked up over 300 million earned impressions.

bring together the creative, production and strategic capabilities at the outset and think through the content needs for each platform – before cameras are rolling."

The reality, he adds, is that content is consumed differently on different platforms: In a social feed, brands need to capture a consumers' attention in a matter of seconds, whereas in longer-form content the story can be revealed a bit more slowly. Video consumption habits vary by device and platform.

Social platforms on mobile, for example, will often be watched vertically without sound. Thinking through each platform at the beginning

means that content can be executed in a way that's more effective for each channel, without needing to force-fit it onto a particular platform.

Sutton points to recent work the agency did for Tim Hortons. Tapping into Canadians' love for hockey, Zulu found a new way to bring attention to Tim's long-standing grassroots support of the sport, by extending that to Kenya's only hockey team, the Ice Lions. The brand flew the team to Canada, provided them with new gear and surprised them with a visit from hockey heavy-weights Sidney Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon. Mroueh adds the social and data team were in the edit suite with the creative team as they sifted through footage. To capture people's attention right off the bat, the analytics team suggested that Crosby and MacKinnon be featured in the first two seconds of the creative to increase viewership, whereas in the longer-form digital video, the reveal was kept a surprise. And while the agency had to filter through more than 85 hours of footage in different formats, the payoff was worth it: 11 million video views, more than one million engagements and over 300 million earned media impressions.

While finding efficiency isn't the end goal for this approach, Sutton says by front-loading the planning process, less time has to be spent editing and re-shooting content, allowing the studio to move through production at an even faster pace.

The holistic approach, however, only works because the people crafting content are a diverse group of skilled pros who are able to approach production differently. "Content needs to be centred in great storytelling and brilliant execution," Mroueh says. He points to recent work the agency did with CAMH, which had real people talk about their challenges with mental illness. The producer on the project had to be both a journalist and live-caster, finding people who could authentically share their stories – not an easy task.

Going forward, Sutton says the focus for Zulubot is on continuing to knit together the creative, content strategy, production and analytics disciplines. The agency is also strengthening its partnerships with platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Snapchat through training, thought leadership and education sessions.

"Our teams need to not just be experts on the platforms, today, but experts on the future possibilities of these platforms," Sutton says. "That's what will continue to set us apart."

Zulubot

Creative production with strategic purpose

Zulubot is in high demand. The five-year-old production studio housed on its own floor within Toronto agency Zulu Alpha Kilo is on a hiring spree. Last month, two additional large edit suites were added, bringing Zulubot's total capacity to eight.

"At one point last year, we had every edit suite going and we had to hire additional editors and producers to meet our client's content needs," says Zak Mroueh, founder & CCO of Zulu. "It was exciting to feel that buzz and we knew we needed to expand the studio."

In 2018, the studio put out more than a thousand individual pieces of content – everything from filming short form work for digital platforms to producing longer form pieces that started in digital and migrated to television.

The demand makes sense, says Mroueh: Brands have increasingly become aware of the power of content, because it can serve many marketing objectives. From apps to video to social posts, marketers have a variety of tools at their disposal to connect more deeply with their consumers on both a tactical and emotional level.

But any studio can churn out content, he adds. Zulubot differentiates itself as being more than just a production facility (though, it also does commercial work).

Its secret sauce lies in tapping into Zulu's wider creative team in order to develop strategically oriented and effective content from the outset. Within the past year, the studio has increased its efforts to work with other Zulu disciplines, from creative to strategy to analytics.

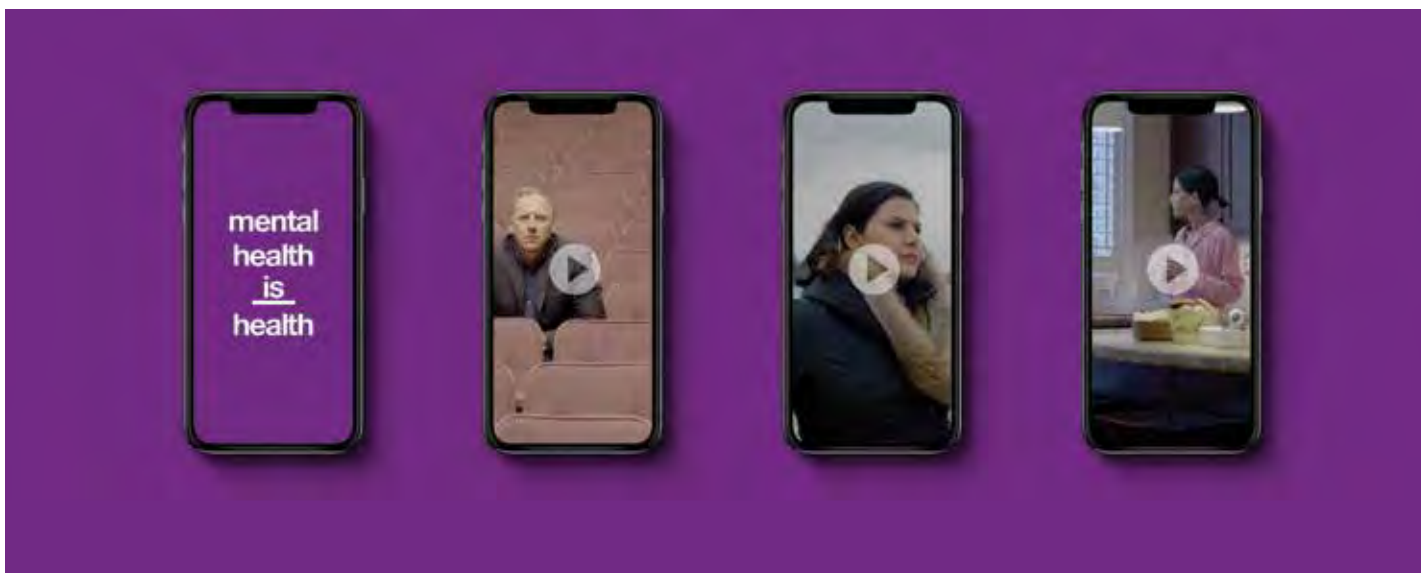
"In the past, something would be produced and then you'd retrofit it to a platform," says Mike Sutton, president of the agency. "Today, we



To draw attention to the reality that gun control isn't just an American problem, the production studio created a series of videos highlighting real survivors of gun violence in this country.



To promote HomeEquity Bank's spunky new positioning the studio edited a series of online and TV spots featuring still-spry home-owners refusing to leave the homes they love.



For CAMH's "Mental Health is Health" campaign, the studio created short docs featuring real people (and some famous NHLers) talking about the struggle to get their mental health issues treated as seriously as their physical ailments.



To promote the annual Design Thinkers conference, Zulubot hooked up prominent designers to a lie detector to answer important questions, like "Is your wardrobe primarily black?"



There's never a good time to get sick, so to promote Betadine, the studio edited a series of TV and online videos showcasing people using the product to stave off a sore throat at decidedly awkward moments.



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President
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Warby Parker adds AR to its app

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Production house meets consultancy

Four-year-old King Ursa has been generating buzz and getting the word out about its agency/consultancy/production house approach to solving brand woes, says Eric Vieira, partner and connections planner at the Toronto shop.

While most brand partners fit neatly in boxes – production studio here, media agency there, business consultancy thrown in for good measure – at King Ursa, the decision was made early on to toss that formula out the window, says Vieira.

The goal for King Ursa, Vieira says, is to take the best of all the worlds and offer companies a way of getting data-driven content solutions that are both cost effective and efficient. It views content as an ever-changing concept, adds Vieira. “Content is whatever output a client needs that supports its business objectives – it can be everything from a website to video production, or even an internal communication strategy.”

At the core, everything the shop does, he says, is rooted in data and insight. “Our first two pillars are analysis and strategy,” he says. “Before we even touch content, we look at everything through a behavioural lens, through the information available to use on social channels and other digital platforms and through key businesses’ metrics. Then we make sure it’s informing the content we’re being asked to produce.”

“Sometimes, that means tweaking the brand strategy and even the metrics companies gather”, he says – an unusual proposition coming from most content studios, but as Vieira repeats: King Ursa isn’t a traditional agency partner.

“By doing it this way, we can drive efficiency, and make sure that the content itself is actually ladder up and fulfilling business demands,” he says.

To meet that evolving demand, King Ursa has had to double in size in the past year alone – bringing its total employee count to 22, says partner and creative director Paulo Salomao, and with new business wins, the shop will be adding even more fresh faces to the mix.

The shop boasts an eclectic mix of expertise on staff – everything from producers and video editors to animators and VFX specialists to data analysts and traditional agency roles. (The shop also boasts one of Toronto’s largest troves of video and film equipment for staff to play around with, says Salomao.)

Keeping what would otherwise be provided by disparate agencies under a single roof means that the creative output is not only streamlined for clients

The Toronto studio blends a consultancy, ad agency and production studio model to meet evolving brand needs.

(brands have less agency partners to manage), but it means King Ursa is able to maintain quality assurance on the end result. While not brand work, Salomao points to the recently launched One Academy, an urban chic gym conceived and fully branded by the agency. In its first six months, the gym was turning a profit, and nearly a year in, it’s hit capacity.

“This is a great test-and-learn playground for us,” says Salomao. “The gym allows us to optimize our approach on our dime versus our client’s dime.”

Overall, King Ursa’s approach appears to be working: about 80% of the shop’s growth has come through word-of-mouth, new business wins and incremental existing client assignments. It has also begun to pick up AOR assignments, in the past year winning national work for Moosehead and Timberland Canada. (For the latter, it’s even handling the shoe company’s media buy.)

The secret, Vieira says, comes down to a “Trojan horse” approach to client’s business. “The more we know about their business, the better we can provide output,” he says. “We’re not just providers. We want to be partners – essentially an extension of their marketing department.”



As AOR, the shop helped Timberland Canada launch its e-commerce site.



Through incremental growth, today, King Ursa handles all creative output for Moosehead.



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Unified's executive producers Michi Lepik-Stahl and Laurie Kerr Jones each bring more than 20 years of experience to the table.

"Agencies need to deliver such a wide range of content for their clients on faster timelines and smaller budgets, and new models are required to meet these challenges and make these projects happen," she says.

The shop's approach is relatively straight-forward: Agencies can tap Unified for specific needs (such as photography or direction) or for a full end-to-end production solution (from line- to post-production). And unlike most studios, a single producer will work with a client throughout the process, which means there's no hand off between the pre- and post-work being completed, says Kerr Jones.

"The traditional model tends to start with a line producer, who takes on the production side. Once the footage is delivered, it's handed to an edit house, where a post producer oversees it," she says. "That works well for some people, but we think a more streamlined approach will be more efficient. This model also makes sure that the content is living up to the standards demanded by the client - there's nothing lost in translation along the pipeline."

The studio has a well-rounded roster of directors, photographers and editors, says executive producer Michi Lepik-Stahl.

"We love to surround ourselves with amazing talent," she says.

With an in-house staff of 15, Unified has everything from editors and animators to technical assistants to producers. The production-and-post house has a collection of camera equipment, a small shooting studio available on site, as well as a couple of multi-purpose suites (editorial, audio and colour correction) - and the plan is to grow its post-production capabilities, says Lepik-Stahl.

"Everybody talks about integrated production, and that's what we can offer," she says. "Our vision is to truly be 'Unified.'"

Unified Content

An end-to-end solution model

Amere six months into its existence, and Unified Content has already racked up the frequent flyer miles. Since its October 2018 launch the Toronto-based production-and-post studio has travelled to 16 different countries and traversed Canada for its work with brands like RBC, Lincoln and WestJet.

Businesses today are inundated with a need to produce high-quality content quickly and efficiently, says executive producer Laurie Kerr Jones. To keep up with the changing demand, Unified Content is hoping to carve out a unique approach to help advertising agencies achieve their brands' goals.

She points to recent work the studio did with DDB and VW. The English and French spots combat various misconceptions around the cost of owning a Volkswagen, with the tag "Just the facts with Justin Facts." Working with director Tom Feiler and editor Peter Miller, the creative takes a comedic look at the everything from the car co's Prepaid Maintenance Plan, to the fact that Volkswagen offers warranty coverage that's 33% longer. VW needed four high-production value social spots, and to help manage overhead, Unified handled everything from production through to delivery on the campaign, which launched in early February.



With only a month behind them, Unified ventured to 16 different countries to create 25 videos for WestJet's holiday calendar campaign.



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Array of Stars

New partnership takes flight

Toronto's Array of Stars (AOS) and Quiver ended 2018 by entering a new union. The now merged production studios had been working together regularly over the past year, says AOS founder and managing partner, Alistair Leyland. They'd first partnered together on a couple of projects for brands like Sony Pictures Television, GMR Marketing, VISA and TIFF. But it wasn't until the light-studded (and show-stopping) Nuit Blanche execution they undertook for INFINITI's QX50 that the partners at each shop realized the true chemistry between them.

INFINITI's ad agency UNION originally approached two-year-old Quiver for help in creating an innovative campaign around the new vehicle. On the back of similar work for the AGO, Quiver managing director (and now partner, VP development at Array of Stars) Graham Budd immediately thought of AOS. Together, they brought to life a motion activated display that featured more than 48,000 LED lights fused to the body of an INFINITI QX50 crossover SUV. It was a hit. Thousands interacted with the car during the festivities, and it's now travelling across Canada reaching millions of people, he says.

The two studios are a wildly exciting complimentary fit, says Leyland. Quiver's strong background in experiential and content production fit well with AOS's expertise in digital technology and design. "Both are craft-driven," he adds, "and each agency tries to put 'story' at the forefront of everything we do." What's more, the five-year-old Array was in the process of tweaking its growth strategy, actively seeking to broaden its offering.

"One thing that's made Array of Stars successful is that we made a conscious effort to stay in our lane and not over-commit to things outside our wheelhouse," he says. "That worked for the first five years — building our core design and digital competency — but we wanted to take a different approach for the next chapter and assume some strategic risk, based on where we see the industry heading."

"From a high level, the reality of what makes a company like AOS valuable in the marketing and advertising ecosystem (niche, cutting edge technology), also means that the skills and expertise expected of our team is constantly evolving," he adds. Looking ahead, he says, with the blurring lines between content, technology and experiential, the need to broaden Array of Stars' skillset became apparent.

Craft and storytelling will still drive the bulk of the merged shop's approach to production, adds Cole Sullivan, founding partner and creative director, AOS. "A lot of companies like to use the latest and greatest technology for the sake of it," he says. "For us, rather than going into projects with the attitude of 'We have this really cool technology we can throw at the problem,' we try to extract a story, with compelling characters, and hone in on the right technology that helps us craft a captivating narrative."



Partners (left to right) Alistair Leyland, Graham Budd and Cole Sullivan plan to take their production studio global.

The company counts among its staff folks who aren't from traditional marketing and advertising backgrounds (Leyland, for example, came up in the film and TV world), and Sullivan says the work it does with clients in the entertainment space, such as Sony Pictures Television, Vice and Discovery, means the shop spends a lot of time thinking through what people actually want to watch. The goal, Leyland says, is to always blend the old-school film industry hustle with the forward power of digital. The result is a story that resonates across platforms.

So far the studio's coupling has been a huge success, adds Leyland. In the first 15 days of 2019, the production studio signed more new business than in the entire first quarter of 2018, he says.

"Our phone won't stop ringing," Leyland says.

The 20-person company will likely grow another 50% this year to keep up with demand, he says.

While the merged AOS remains a proud Toronto-led business through and through, counting stalwart Toronto-based brands like the Toronto Public Library, AGO, SickKids and Spin Master, as well as Canadian agencies like UNION, Cossette, Zulu Alpha Kilo, and Grey among its clients, the end goal for the expanded team is to take a more world-focused view. "We really believe we have an opportunity, through our work and our relationships, to win global work and significantly move the needle for those clients," he says.



Tasked by UNION, the studio created an interactive LED installation and experience launching the all-new INFINITI QX50 that travelled across Canada with stops in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.



Alongside Cossette, the studio created an interactive hub site for the latest “SickKids VS” campaign to help people spread the word, allowing them to join a crew and donate.



The eight-part branded content series, created for Jeep with UM and Bell Media, followed Canadian mountain climbers in their quest to tackle two unclimbed peaks near Mt. Everest.



The production studio created a full brand identity, design system and website for the iconic Bar Raval restaurant in Little Italy.



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Agency insiders on the year that was

BY JENNIFER HORN

Strategy's Agency Survey gets industry-folk talking, revealing wishes, plans and their beefs about briefs (the business documents, not the underwear).

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Topping agencies' wishlists this year was a desire to clarify and align expectations. The single biggest beef is briefs: 39% of respondents expressed wanting clients to provide better and more clear briefs.

Second on the list of priorities at 29% was the desire to attract more business from higher profile and larger brands (however, 12% said their priority was to take whatever business they could get).

Another 23% want brands to be more realistic when it comes to budgets, while 19% say they would like more understanding from clients when it comes to time constraints.

For the most part, brands want the same thing this year as last year. Number one is "more cost-effective solutions," according to 30% of respondents.

The second biggest client demand was for agencies to deliver "more strategic insight" to their businesses and brands.



The skillset wishlist varied slightly between the two years: fewer report that their clients want "more integration across marketing disciplines" (11% in 2018 vs. 18% in 2017). More respondents than last year indicated that client demands were for agencies to develop "better creative" (9% vs. 6%) and to improve their "analytics and data expertise" (8% vs. 5%).

AGENCY GROWTH

In 2018, 62% of respondents said their shops grew in size. This was higher than the previous year's 55%. Another 22% say departments remained the same size (versus 28% in 2017). And 15% reported that their agency shrunk (compared to 12% the year prior).

Speaking of changes: there were more agencies in 2018 than 2017 that grew thanks to a merger. Approximately 9% of respondents say their agency experienced a merger in 2018 (versus 5% the previous year), while another 6% say their agency was acquired.

Almost a third of survey-takers say their agencies were looking to expand mandates from already-existing clients in 2018.

THE NEW RECRUITS

Hiring took place across the agency board, but in 2018, more respondents (43%) than the previous year (36%) reported jobs being filled in the strategy department. More movement was also seen in the media department this year than last (17% vs. 11%).

While still a significant portion of new agency hires, the digital and creative departments saw less movement between the two years: in 2018, 53% and 39% of respondents reported that their companies hired creative and digital specialists, respectively (compared to 56% and 47% in 2017).

Newly added to the survey, 9% of the respondents say that positions were added to their community and content management teams.

As for the type of work that was outsourced last year, 57% say it was their creative department that primarily used



freelancers (down 14% from 2017); while 45% mostly worked with outsiders on production (up 10%); 13% outsourced media planning for the most part (up 6%); and 10% say they primarily used freelancers for strategy (up 1%).

PLATFORM INTERESTS

Almost 40% of agency respondents noticed their clients placed more emphasis online, 31% said the same thing in 2017. Another 18% of agencies reported clients placing more emphasis on social (down from 22% in 2017).

On areas of increasing interest, survey-takers said they saw more demand for shopper marketing (up 2%) and predictive analytics (up 2%) between years.

As for areas that brands were seen reducing spend in, 47% said that fewer dollars were allocated to print by their clients

(on par with 2017 numbers), television (39%), radio (20%) and OOH (12%) followed behind – these were all less than last year's numbers, as a decrease in spend was spread out more across areas like AR and wearables, loyalty programs, multicultural marketing, direct and influencer campaigns in 2018 than 2017.



ON DIVERSITY WITHIN AGENCIES

New to the survey, questions around agencies' efforts to cultivate diversity and inclusion in the workplace were posed, with 36% of respondents reporting that employers currently track and measure the number of women and visible minorities in their ranks.

Another 28% state that their agency has implemented programs that address today's racial and

gender divide, while 23% say they're in the midst of developing new policies. However, 22% say their shops have not yet invested in programs like bias training.

Each year, *strategy's* Agency survey attracts respondents from a range of ad shops: creative, media, PR, digital, design, experiential, among others. Traditional ad agencies tend to offer the largest number of survey participants, and while 2018 was no different (57% were creative), we did see more traction from the media side at 15% (up from 5% in 2017). The third biggest group was PR at 10%. The majority (81%) of this year's survey takers come from agencies with under 200 staff.

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