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No Frills hauled some serious hardware at the 2019 Shopper Innovation + Activation Awards.

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Walmart Canada hits 25

It wasn't always easy, but the American big-box chain won Canadians' hearts through marketing with a local, eco bent.

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ON THE COVER: No Frills already held the status of a Canadian icon, thanks to its iconic black-and-yellow colour scheme that's been lauded by designers. But its image needed a reboot, and so the grocer called on discount "Haulers" to breathe life back into the brand, dropping a soundtrack in the process. Therein lies the essence of our cover, which is a calling card for the industry as it takes a new spin on the path-to-purchase. Retailers and brands sure are keeping to the beat – whether that's beefing up omnichannel strategies or creating new uses for physical retail. Here's to those who keep grooving and moving, no matter what song comes next.

A new spin on all things retail

Perhaps a leopard can grow a new tail. (OK, so that's not the phrase. But if it's all the same to you, I'd like to reframe the notion of "changing one's innate nature" for the purpose of this editorial.)

CPG, shopper marketing and all those wonderful retail things are metamorphosing. I mean, a washing detergent is opening up laundromats across the Americas. If that's not a sign of retail's new spin on the path-to-purchase, I'm not sure what is.

Indeed, Tide is growing a second tail to add to its laundry empire. If you didn't hear, the P&G brand's U.S. arm announced in February that it plans to open 2,000 cleaning stores by 2020. That's not counting the delivery vans it's putting on roads. Soon, Tide workers in yellow-and-orange wear – picking up dirty underthings from condo lobbies to be washed and returned – could be as ubiquitous as thermal UberEats delivery bags are on sidewalks.

Forget being a play for better Pod distribution. Tide Cleaners (as the growing chain is called) is a whole new revenue model. To add to that, it's an extension of the brand off shelves. The pushing-nearly-80-year-old CPG can now go direct to the front doors of people from varying socioeconomic backgrounds, from students on campus to working professionals in office buildings.

Genius diversification strategies like this add to a pile of proof that the industry – if I may quote *strategy's* Mary Maddever in her pub note on the next page – is undergoing an identity crises. More conspicuously amongst its brand players, both from a product and an advertising POV.

Nowadays, Procter & Gamble could be mistaken for a tech company. Have you seen the Gillette "heated razor"

P&G's fashioning to emulate "a hot towel shave"? Or how it's investing in Future X Smart Stores that examine shoppers' pores to make Olay product recos?

Then there are those creative advertisers – many of which come from Canada – who can't help but emulate the tactics (and glam) of entertainment/streetwear brands. One of them is the star of our cover.

Much like the vinyl revival, No Frills re-emerged to be considered "hip" by rerouting its place on the path-to-purchase. At the drop of a music track (seriously, it mixed a song, without any mention of the grocer, and seeded it out to millennials who ate it up), the brand courted discount shoppers by tapping into cultural references. "Haulers" also builds a case for the long game, crafting a brand story arc via a multi-year strategy that leads to a Grand Prix Shopper Innovation + Activation Awards win (see p.22).

This issue is filled with strategies similar to these, plus the shopper trends driving the industry's new lease on retail, and a whole whack of seriously creative shopper marketing. So dig in.

Jennifer Horn, editor



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Retail's identity crisis

I NEVER EXPECTED to buy pomegranate molasses or toilet paper from Amazon, but somehow that happened.

Local retail that I used to rely on for everything has become less appealing. It's not them, it's me.

Out of stock, inability to order in another size/color/model, things that might have been tolerable a few years back now seem unacceptable.

Amazon will get it to me tomorrow, so why bother traipsing around? We're too spoiled for retail as we knew it.

The growing recognition of the impact that all those overnight single-item shipments (and all those boxes) have on the planet, plus the domination of a single corporate entity is now a deterrent for some, but the Amazon effect on our expectations remains.

Bricks-and-mortar responded with a greater focus on tailored offers and better experiences, battling back with the best of online and offline worlds. But when it comes to the more unique play of the two – a focus on personalization – it's getting harder to play catch-up.

At this year's Shopper Marketing Forum we heard from brands like Canadian Tire, Walmart and Loblaw that got in early and invested big so are now well along the digital transformation path, and have moved to next-level marketing performance and CRM-led "frictionless" retail rejigs.

We've signed on to so many programs, apps and email lists that brands who haven't invested or evolved a direct-to-consumer

platform now face shoppers who are opting out more than they're opting in. Plus privacy regulations keep getting tighter.

And that's a real wild card. Privacy concerns amid awareness of data use and breaches have consumers wary.

While brands are figuring out how to build an increasingly elusive direct relationship with the consumer (and how to fund that investment), people are rethinking their relationship with stuff. 'Consumerism is killing the planet' is a growing refrain and mainstream preoccupation, and as our anxious stressed-out society seeks to simplify their lives, amassing things is on the hit list.

Which loops back to my shopping dilemma. I need things. Things come in plastic tubs. While I dabble in making my own yogurt, I feel it's best for all that I don't attempt cheese-making, which is why I'm signing up for Loop's launch in Canada (see p.15).

The program partners with CPG brands to offer their products in reuseable containers, from metal coolers to glass bottles that are returned to store. That's the kind of offering I want to hear about, and will influence brand purchase and store choice.

Back when Walmart first launched in Canada, similar to when Target landed, it was heralded as the end of retail as we know it. All would perish in the wake of their scale and pricing. But the strong adapted and gave consumers a better reason to keep choosing them. Like the addictive points-for-cash-off Optimum program that gamified shopping

FRICITIONLESS IS GREAT AND ALL, BUT MAYBE IT'S GUMPTION TIME.

and made Shoppers Drug Mart the obvious place for pharma and beauty.

And now Shoppers' parent Loblaw has stepped up the game and borrowed a page from the Amazonian playbook. You can subscribe to be an elite member with special perks (free shipping and extra points), and the latest move is a bold media play. As more people go the ad-free streamer route for media, the reach of a retail network gains weight, and as a power member of the merged PC Optimum program, I know how insidiously influential the right offer at the right time can be.

The quest for loyalty through perks and inciting behaviour via targeting wizardry is definitely a killer combo; but gamechanger actions can inspire fidelity of a different stripe.

There's an opportunity to do more with the platforms and power retailers and brands have, to keep shoppers engaged beyond the reach and ability of an algorithm. More than a decade ago, Walmart's demand for suppliers to reduce packaging had an impact on the chain's eco footprint and beyond. Today, IKEA and Walmart's more aggressive sustainability pledges are making bigger headlines.

Frictionless is great and all, but maybe it's gumption time.

There's an opportunity for more brands to come out with bolder, faster change on the waste front, on the Made-In-Canada front, as well as the wellness and eco front.

That's a story we'd opt in for.

Cheers, mm

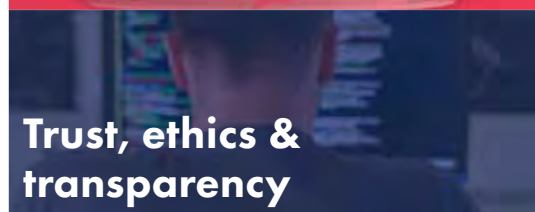
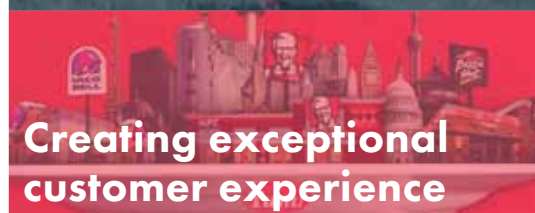
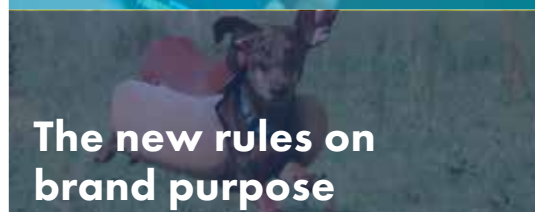
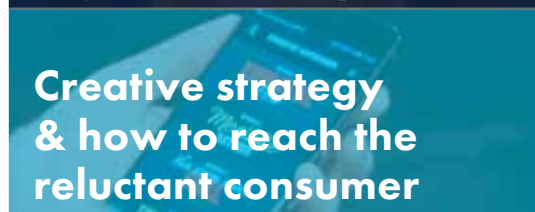
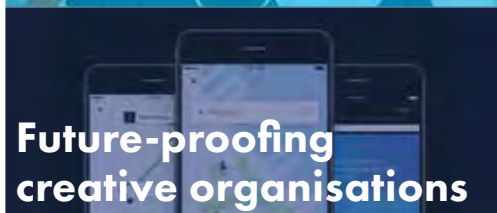
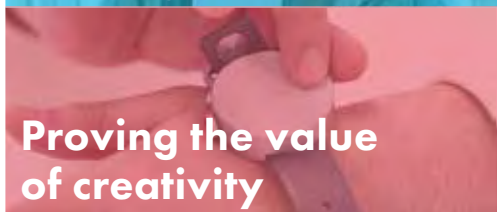
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CANADIAN TIRE'S FANCY NEW RANGE

By Josh Kolm

Canadian Tire already leads in market share in the outdoor cooking category, so this summer it's looking to its newest premium brand to find new areas of growth.

Exclusive brands like Motomaster and Mastercraft have long been staples on the retailer's shelves, but expanding that portfolio is a "driving force behind Canadian Tire's growth strategy," says Rebecca Harth, associate of brand management for its cooking portfolio. It's doing that through brands the retailer grew itself (Canvas furniture), acquired (Paderno kitchenware and Helly Hansen outerwear) or secured the exclusive rights for in the Canadian market (Petco pet products).

Joining those ranks is premium U.S. brand Vermont Castings. Canadian Tire has the exclusive rights to sell a collection of grills it developed with the brand, which Harth says is known for quality and craftsmanship – values the retailer's research says are important to premium BBQ buyers.

Harth says Canadian Tire's assortment in all categories needs to expand if it wants to keep appealing to a range of different households and continue to grow. But doing that through exclusive brands, retail analyst Tony Chapman says, is smart as Canadian Tire can leverage its scale to acquire brands. By controlling how the brands' equity is built and creating scarcity, the retailer makes its brands "must see" – and for brands like Vermont Castings, turns it into a "trophy" for BBQ fans.

To build that equity for Vermont Castings, Canadian Tire has worked with Leo Burnett, Touche! and Weber Shandwick on a big push.

In a TV spot, the camera crosses through different seasons and weather patterns, showing how there is no "BBQ season" for grilling experts (even if they do live in Canada) and that Vermont Castings has the durability and craftsmanship to endure any conditions. The campaign also includes influencer sponsorships with chefs, online ads that change based on weather, plus assets in butcher shops and interactive pop-ups.

Which means the retailer's likely to be packed with BBQ fans this spring.

RETAIL AS A COMMUNITY HUB

By Melissa Dunne

A store is not just a store anymore.

Beyond thinking of physical retail as merely a "distribution channel" stores are now "a vital channel for the distribution of experiences," says Doug Stephens, president at Retail Prophet. Indeed, in this age of online shopping-for-everything, retailers need far more than well-stocked shelves to convince people to leave the comforts of their home and shop IRL.

That's why three legacy Canadian retailers are investing heavily into broadening the definition of retail – creating new places and spaces to work, stretch and climb.



Working to get people in the door

Staples has been known as a place to buy pens and paper and, well, staples since its first store opened in Canada in 1991. But now it's trying to pivot from an "office-supply superstore to a working and learning company," says David Boone, CEO of Staples Canada.

To get more people in the door, Staples has begun selling new services to business professionals on top of products, including jumping into the red-hot co-working space. The sleek new Staples Studio space at its recently refurbished store in Toronto includes access to a café, regular community events and workshops, as well as printing/marketing services.

And the bold pivot is really resonating with Canadians. About three months after unveiling the new concept, the Toronto location has seen double-digit growth in store traffic, says Boone, adding that similar changes are set to come to most of its 305 stores across Canada in the next 12- to 24-months.



Scaling to new heights

Vancouver-headquartered MEC, which first launched in 1971, long attracted Canadians with a strong whiff of granola and campfires. But that changed when the outdoor-gear retailer rebranded from Mountain Equipment Co-op to simply MEC in an effort to appeal more to active urbanites in 2013.

MEC's new Toronto flagship opened in April and pays homage to its granola roots, while embracing its refined, urbanite image. The new flagship allows customers to try products that might be difficult to otherwise do in a city, by offering VR tents and a 1,000-square-foot bouldering wall. An open-concept community space dubbed Basecamp will also be used to host how-to clinics and community events to further the connection to active Torontonians.

Anne Donohoe, MEC's CMO, explains the store on one of Canada's premier shopping strips – Toronto's Queen Street West – “is about having people connect to the experiences they're going to have outdoors,” but also want to spend time in the store simply because “it's an experience within itself.”



Stretching into new areas

Indigo Books & Music started out as a big-box bookstore in 1996, but now calls itself a “cultural department store.” Today, its 208 bricks-and-mortar stores – 119 of which are “superstores” – have jumped into the trendy wellness space.

Last year, CEO Heather Reisman hosted the chains' first-ever wellness event featuring a meditation workshop. The company says the response was so positive that Indigo stores have since hosted a range of yoga classes, crystal workshops and even gemstone bracelet sessions. “We see ourselves as a cultural hub,” explains SVP of marketing, Samantha Taylor. “There's an opportunity for people to come and lose themselves for a few hours in this highly digital world.”



LOBLAW'S OPTIMUM-IZED DIGITAL AD APPROACH

Loblaws recently revealed it's testing a digital ad service with a small group selected from the 18 million members of its PC Optimum loyalty program. Data collected from the program is used to target the group with ads featuring vendor brands, across publisher sites and social networks, in exchange for extra rewards points.

One of the pilot's most enticing elements is that it uses first-party data that reflects customer purchase behaviour. This allows for direct attribution for online and offline sales and more accurate targeting than what's provided by third-party cookie or social data.

While some are comparing the pilot to media offerings from Target, Walmart and Amazon, Jason Dubroy, VP and managing director of TraceyLocke, sees similarities to Kroger's strategy. The U.S. grocery chain's two-year-old Precision Marketing offers co-branded ads, search, creative, targeted coupons, editorial products, a deep analytics engine, in-store sampling and events – all driven by loyalty data.

“It has changed the game, much more than Target and Walmart,”

Dubroy says. “Kroger has migrated in-store and online media into one closed loop ecosystem, which is a term you're going to be hearing a lot. It's a continuous reinforcement of the retailer brand that allows vendors to participate in that brand narrative and captures more shopping by rewarding customers who are in that loop.”

The pilot on its own has a value proposition that's attractive for brands in the broader PC Optimum program, and it goes beyond targeting.

Dubroy points out that if a consumer is a loyal Loblaws shopper, a brand that is part of the retailer's narrative is being optimized to the consumer's preferences. Plus, insights from first-party loyalty data could lead to more relevant creative, especially if ads go beyond the typical discounts consumers already get from other sources.

“If content is king, context is God,” Dubroy says. “Context means personalization, which makes shoppers say: ‘Hey, you thought about what I need based on what you know I like.’ Canadians tend to like that.” **JK**



MARIE KONDO EFFECT HITS GREAT WHITE NORTH

A FLOCK OF RETAILERS FROM ASIA HAVE OPENED STORES HERE, AS BRANDS FROM THE EAST CASH IN ON WESTERNERS' APPETITE FOR THE MINIMALIST-AESTHETIC THE FAMOUS ORGANIZER POPULARIZED. PAIR THAT WITH A LOVE OF DEALS, AND A LARGE ASIAN DIASPORA, AND A TREND IS BORN.

BY MELISSA DUNNE

Clockwise, top left: Uniqlo has grown from one to 11 Canadian stores; Lemongrass House is building a North American presence; Muji's Toronto flagship is its largest outside of Asia; Miniso has nearly 20 stores in Ontario alone, with plans to open 6,000 worldwide by 2020.

Look left or right in any big Canadian city, and you're likely to notice the bevy of brands from Asia that have set up shop here in recent years. First, it was Japanese retailers, such as Muji and Uniqlo, now it's Korea's VDL Cosmetics and Thailand's Lemongrass House. Perhaps we can blame (or thank, depending on your perspective) Japanese organizing consultant and author Marie Kondo for North America's desire for the minimalist aesthetic that Asian retailers bring to the masses.

Kondo's paean to minimalism, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*, was first published in Japan in 2011, then hit North America in 2014. Kondo, and her stylishly spare look, enjoyed a second-coming when her Netflix series, *Tidying Up with Marie Kondo*, hit screens earlier this year.

Canadians also love a good value proposition, says Dubroy. "We live in a discount culture right now, so affordability is kind of a hallmark of most Asian retailers coming to Canada." That could be a driver behind the arrival of a slew of discount retailers from the East, including Miniso, Mumuso and Ximivogue.

Our desire for discount retail, particularly Japanese, is so ravenous that the chain doesn't even have to actually be from Japan.

Oomomo, for example, opened in Toronto in late 2018 as a "Japanese-inspired" dollar store. Despite its Vancouver origins, some still erroneously dub the retailer (which has five stores in Canada so far) as being "Japan's version of Dollarama."

And while these discount retailers have garnered tons of press and plenty of excitement in the Great White North, not all of it has been positive. Miniso's Canadian division, for one, recently narrowly avoided bankruptcy.

The Kondo effect and love of deals may have sparked an interest in the East among Westerners, but Jason Dubroy, VP managing director of TracyLocke, says having a large ethnic diaspora is what could be attracting Asian brands here. In fact, the majority

(61.8%) of newcomers here in 2016 were born in Asia, according to Stats Canada.

There's also the fact that the collapse of big American retailers like Sears and Target has literally and figuratively left holes in malls across Canada. And the retrenchment of U.S. brands, such as the Gap and J. Crew, also mean there's room for new retailers.

All of these factors combined have created the perfect storm for Eastern retailers thriving in the West, say retail analysts. Here's a look at some of the Asian-born brands that are creating a new retail battleground.



Muji

Retail analyst Bruce Winder calls Muji "a latter-day Gap – an updated, interesting Gap." The affordable brand sells similar items to the Gap, such as French terry hoodies. But, the Japan-born brand also hawks home items like aroma diffusers (which are the most popular item in its Toronto flagship store), furniture, bedding and stationery. The brand opened its first store in Tokyo in 1983, and finally opened a Canadian store in Toronto in late 2014. It has 419 stores in Japan, 15 in the U.S. and six in Canada so far. The retailer adds local touches in its Canadian stores, serving up everything from totes with a line drawing of the CN Tower on them to coffee from local roaster, De Mello Palheta.



an effort to celebrate Canadian culture: its "Welcome Store" pop-up shop by Rethink offered Canadians the chance to keep a flannel shirt or leave it for a new immigrant (see p.31).

VDL Cosmetics

Among the fashion set, Korean beauty (a.k.a. K-Beauty) and skincare brands have achieved cult status in recent years. Seoul-based VDL Cosmetics was only founded in 2012, but since then it has become globally known for helping people achieve what it dubs that "glass skin glow." VDL, which stands for Vivid Dreams come to Life, opened its first North American store in the form of a flagship on Toronto's trendy Queen St. W. shopping strip last summer. It also opened a pop-up at the Toronto Eaton Centre in April, in support of its five-year partnership with Pantone, which includes a collection of products inspired by Pantone's Colour of the Year, Living Coral.



Lemongrass House Canada

Lemongrass House is known for its all-natural, handcrafted, artisan spa products and fragrances. The Thailand-based premium brand opened its first Canadian store on the West Coast in Vancouver's well-heeled Gastown neighbourhood last summer. The airy shop is the first North American store for the retailer, which operates about 40 stores in 12 countries. Lemongrass House already enjoys brand awareness as its products are distributed in more than 30 countries via luxury hotels and spas, including Four Seasons Resorts. The Vancouver shop has hardwood floors and green walls echoing the colour of lemongrass, as well as the brand's logo.

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CELEBRATING CANADA'S 2019 YOUNG LIONS

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THE FUTURE SHOPPER IS NOW

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

IT'S NO SECRET: CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS ARE AT AN ALL-TIME HIGH. THEY'RE RESHAPING THE LANDSCAPE AT RECKONING SPEEDS. BUT – AS WGSN HIGHLIGHTS IN ITS LATEST SHOPPER FORECAST REPORT – MANY BRANDS ARE LEARNING TO NOT ONLY SURVIVE, BUT THRIVE.

THE IMPACTFUL SHOPPER

BIG BRANDS GET INTO THE SUSTAINABILITY GAME IN A BIG WAY.

Clockwise: From zero-waste stores, such as Toronto's Unboxed Market, to "ugly" produce from Loblaw's to refillable containers from big brands via Loop, companies are finding more ways to be eco-friendly.

If Tom Szaky's vision comes to fruition, the world could one day be full of milkmen.

Not the kind that sport white uniforms and deposit glass bottles at your door before sunrise. No, they will arrive bearing a range of common household goods from some of the largest CPG companies in the world: Procter & Gamble's Tide detergent or Nestlé's Häagen-Dazs ice cream. Their goods will come in premium containers made to last (for a small deposit paid upfront), so that, once empty, they can be returned to the facility from whence they came – eventually finding their way back into the system and in front of someone else's door.

Szaky, CEO of New Jersey-based TerraCycle, may have not set out to create a modern "milkman model" when his company launched Loop in January – but that's essentially how it will bridge the gap between the inherent disposability of CPG and consumers' growing environmental consciousness.

Today's shopper is more likely to think about the environmental impact of their purchases before they get in line, according to trend forecasting company WGSN.

For years, sustainability has butted heads with price and convenience, says retail expert Carl Boutet. And Katherine White, a marketing professor of consumer insights and sustainability at the University of British Columbia, agrees. She says researchers have identified an "attitude-behaviour gap" – a tendency for consumers who long for sustainable options to bow out when it comes to putting money on the table. Their reasons are complex: saving the planet remains an abstract and futuristic ambition. Meanwhile, switching to sustainable options can come with short-term personal costs, she says. Add to that the fact that eco-friendly products are often perceived as being inherently less

convenient, effective and attractive.

But that's changing, according to WGSN. The proof is in the size of the companies getting on board. Loop, for example, has attracted the interest of a growing coalition of behemoths: PepsiCo, Unilever, Mars, The Body Shop, Mondelez and Danone, to name a few. The program is being rolled out to consumers in New York and Paris in May, with a planned expansion to London, Toronto, Tokyo and San Francisco by 2020.

It comes after some retailers, such as the Unboxed

Market in Toronto, have adopted the Bulk Barn model (which allows Canadians to bring their own reusable containers to the bulk shop) in an effort to help shoppers reduce waste.

Loblaw's "ugly" produce meets eco-shopper demands, too. Since 2015, it's sold produce that's smaller in size or slightly misshapen – in other words "Naturally Imperfect" – and which wouldn't have normally made it into stores, let alone shopping carts. The product line, under Loblaw's No Name brand, costs 30% less than its "perfect" produce and the retailer has had enough positive response to expand the line. In 2017, it added frozen fruits and veggies, and the line now includes about 36 products.

The payoff for brands that go eco-friendly could be huge. A 2019 report by Accenture notes that Unilever's sustainable

brands (including Dove, Vaseline and Seventh Generation) have seen an average of 30% faster growth than their non-sustainable counterparts. Those brands also now account for 70% of its overall growth.

Meanwhile, brands that fail to act now are likely to face bigger pushback in a couple of years, Boutet says. "It's just going to be too hard a pivot for them [later], so they have to start building [sustainability] into their equation now."



THE IMPATIENT SHOPPER

RETAILERS MAKE STRIDES IN THE RACE TO GIVE SHOPPERS SPEEDY OPTIONS.

Today's shoppers are time-starved and convenience-driven, says Laura Saunter, retail insights editor at WGSN and the author of its *Shopper Forecast* report. Modern shoppers want (and have come to expect) a frictionless shopping experience from the discovery phase through to purchase and delivery.

The ubiquity of connected tech has, in part, made immediacy the new gold standard: 64% of shoppers expect companies to respond to their concerns and

questions in real-time, with Canadians using about nine different channels – from simple texts to hands-free voice AI – to do so, according to a 2018 Salesforce report. These shoppers, it seems, have simply forgotten what it means to wait.

With information at their fingertips, they expect brands to satisfy their needs and wants as they think of them. Naturally, they have flocked towards ultra-convenient, on-demand models for their purchases, where a one-day turnaround on orders has become the new norm.

In 1995, Amazon's U.S. customers expected their deliveries within nine days, according to WGSN.

Last year, shopper impatience drove that number down to only 24 hours. Kantar estimated that 45% of American households were willing to pay the USD\$99 Amazon Prime fee (it's since risen to \$119 in the U.S.) in exchange for the benefits of free and unlimited two-day shipping.

Other brands have been striving to offer high-speed delivery offerings ever since. Last December, Loblaws joined the race when it launched PC Insiders, a paid membership program (currently CAD\$9.99/month or \$99/year) that offers free click-and-collect on groceries,

as well as free shipping from Joe Fresh and Shoppers Drug Mart to its 16 million PC Optimum members.

The needs of the impatient shopper are driving similar changes in-store, as the use of smart checkout technology becomes widespread, Saunter says. Amazon broke new ground with its cashier-less Amazon Go concept stores last year, she notes.

Saunter uses Dirty Lemon, a DTC-born functional beverage brand from the U.S., as an example of a company that's following suit with Amazon. Customers who visit the store can grab one of its beverages from the fridge and leave without ever swiping a device. Instead, they're asked to text the details of their purchase to a customer rep, who then charges the order to their credit card. Initiatives like these eliminate transaction pain points and are ultimately about "trusting and also empowering the consumer," she says. "It's also giving them the level of service that they want."

Walmart launched Jetblack in the U.S. in 2018, a membership-only shopper concierge program that allows customers to place orders by text for USD\$50 per month for a variety of brands, including Saks and Pottery Barn. And in February, American supermarket chain Kroger began rolling out Kroger Pay, an app enabling customers to pay at cash using a barcode connecting their loyalty card and payment information. The program is expected to go national later this year, and follows the grocer's Scan, Bag and Go program launched in 2018. Through that program, Kroger customers use a wireless scanner (or their phones) to scan and bag items as they shop throughout the store. Once at check-out, all that's left to do is for customers to pay using a mobile device.

Nike is also making strides to deliver on convenience. With the opening of its Speed Shop in NYC last November, the footwear giant showed just how serious it is about serving time-starved customers through connecting the in-store and digital shopping experience.

Speed Shop is located in the basement of a six-level megastore. It comes with its own entrance so that busy customers can easily slip in and out by avoiding the shopping hordes on other levels. And through enhancements to the NikePlus app, customers can reserve products from home and later retrieve them from digital lockers in-store – making the Nike fitting experience as seamless as checking the mail.



Above: Amazon Go concept stores and Nike's Speed Shop offer greater speed and convenience.

THE ANXIOUS SHOPPER

COMPANIES CALM CUSTOMERS' FRAYED NERVES BY MINIMIZING IN-PERSON INTERACTIONS.

Related to consumers' newfound need for speed – and in some ways fueling it – is the social isolation emerging from an age obsessed with constant digital updates. Technology has led to an anxious mood state that businesses and brands have looked to alleviate. As a result, consumers, always within reach of their phones, are becoming more introverted and isolated.

This new segment has emerged out of last year's "Invisible Individual," the term coined by WGSN to describe those whose chief concerns were privacy and data. While these shoppers tended to opt out of email blasts and other forms of communication, WGSN's Laura Saunter says the new segment are "people who want to shy away from interactions with retailers almost entirely." According to Mintel research, 33% of U.S. respondents prefer to interact with people online than in person.

While the impacts of this trend are being felt across demographics, Gen Z is at the forefront. The younger demo prefers researching products independently and arriving in store already familiar with what's on offer so that they can come and go with minimal interaction with sales staff. "They don't want to queue; they don't want to speak to people," Saunter says.

WGSN's *Shopper Forecast* report points to Soulfoot, a sneaker store in Germany, as a recent expression of a retailer leaning into this trend. The flagship shop features display units with screens that become transparent once a sneaker is scanned using RFID technology, revealing information about its selection of Reeboks, Asics and other brands.

Moreover, display tables double as points of sale, so that customers can scan, pay and leave having purchased their kicks in peace.

Similarly, Google ran hardware pop-up shops last year that gave customers the chance to touch and feel the products on display, while learning about them from self-led digital tutorials rather than sales staff.

"Customers could enjoy an unaided, try-before-you-buy product experience, without the pressure to purchase," notes Saunter in WGSN's report.

The Age of Anxiety has reared its head in other ways, too. Today, some retailers are designing products and retail spaces in ways that don't overwhelm.


Japanese retailer Muji (whose name translates to "no-brand quality goods") has gained prominence for its minimalist packaging of plain-and-simple household goods and apparel. It's an aesthetic and brand credo that aligns with what others have called "calm design."

San Francisco-based D2C startup Brandless, which launched in 2017, uses a white box as the key branding element for its food and home items. Its products are

Right: Brands like Brandless and Muji address shopper anxiety by stripping away clutter on packaging.



sold in packaging that's wrapped in muted hues. The brand says it's an approach based on stripping away typical brand clutter to focus on what matters most, such as vegan and sulfate-free ingredients. Its approach is not unlike that of M/F People, an American minimalist lifestyle brand, whose plain packaging and calm design reflect the emerging philosophy that, sometimes, minimal branding is the best branding.

Such minimalist approaches can also help anxious consumers overcome product and price fatigue. A 2019 trends report from digital agency Isobar states: "While seemingly counterintuitive to the idea of increasing brand engagement... mindfulness and social media detoxes [can] make brands appear more human, less self-serving, and establish an emotional connection with consumers." 

HOW TO FUTURE-PROOF YOUR PERFORMANCE MARKETING



WHY EFFECTIVELY DRIVING A CONSUMER'S ACTION
MEANS HAVING A LESS RIGID APPROACH. BY JOSH KOLM

Big companies have the scale to collect loads of data from populations across the country. But while they might have the size, startup and DTC brands have the skill, since many of them were born by using performance marketing to not just drive sales, but to build their brands.

This ever-evolving competition means translating data into results is now a business imperative. But while performance marketing is typically thought of as more tactical – on the “science” side of “art and science” – the rapid success of upstart brands shows that setting your organization up for success means not being so rigid.

“I’m not quite sure when performance doesn’t impact the brand, and when brand doesn’t drive measurable performance,” says Mark D’Arcy, global CCO at Facebook. “If you’re starting a business in 2019, you can have this intellect of a performance marketer and emotional approach of a brand marketer. And you do it fluidly, caring about the design and copy at the same time that you’re thinking about conversion rates and everything else. You can care about both, and do it at inception.”

But DTC brands don’t have the market cornered on the first-party data that can drive performance. A

ads from brands it stocks across websites and social networks. Loblaw will only be reaching PC Optimum members (for now), but 18 million users offers a large and high-quality pool of first-party data – effectively eliminating the need to rely on third-party sources. The connection to the loyalty program also allows attribution of both online and offline sales to specific campaigns.

Loblaw’s digital ad service is an example of what a holistic performance approach from a large company might look like, using its scale and breadth of data to customize and target ads, as well as directly attribute sales to those efforts.

But Sarah Thompson, CSO at Mindshare Canada, says attribution can be trickier than it seems. For example, direct response and the emerging field of addressable TV has shown that what was typically thought of as a brand-building medium can be a performance driver.

The fact is no one can really say if any single ad is the one that convinced a customer to buy. Mixed market modelling (MMM) doesn’t focus on attributing a purchase or action to a single ad, but on understanding how every piece of media a customer encounters eventually leads to the desired result. Thompson says

pilot launched in April marks Loblaw’s foray into efforts associated with a media company, using sales data it is already collecting through its PC Optimum program to target



Top: Abacus's creative shows the importance of creating breadth of content specifically to be viewed on phones. **Right:** While Facebook's reach and data has made it one of the best options for performance marketing, creative still needs to be aligned with a brand's overall image.

MMM has somewhat been abandoned in the Canadian market, due to the occasionally cost-prohibitive nature of getting high-quality data sets for Canada's relatively small population, as well as an "ebb and flow" when it comes to data science capabilities on the media side.

The important thing marketers need to get back to, Thompson says, is having greater context around a consumer's journey. Part of that can be from having high-quality, owned data, but also looking at other factors that make people open to clicking on a performance-based ad. An influencer post, the weather, what a celebrity wears on the red carpet or a hot topic on social can all have an impact on how any one ad can drive an action.

"You need to see everything you are looking for in the ballpark you want to play in, without spending all your time chasing things that don't exist," Thompson says. "This is the challenge of performance marketing. There will always be ads where it's competitive and price-based. But then there are important questions about how and when a brand inserts itself into the need a person is giving off signals for, and what those signals are."

The key to finding that balance, Thompson suggests, is thinking in terms of having an audience manager, instead of a social media manager. If a manager is empowered by not being siloed with marketing dollars, they can define and analyze audience behaviour across channels – as well as have permission to change course and be fluid with spending behaviour changes.

"What we foresee," says Thompson, "is one person at a keyboard analyzing the data, making a decision and aligning that to an audience."

It's not just about the actions you're trying to drive. An overlooked part of performance is what you're actually putting in front of customers. For years the industry has been hearing it needs to better tailor its creative to online channels, instead of simply reusing broadcast spots. But repurposing creative meant for mass platforms is more than an ineffective approach to performance marketing: it's wasteful.

"Most marketers are totally negating the advantages

that data and ad tech gives them by using it to push the same message out to everyone," says Jeff Goldenberg, co-founder and CSO at Abacus.

Abacus is a performance marketing agency, focused entirely on Facebook and Instagram. In February, it launched a creative studio (run by former Cossette designer Corey Way) aimed at developing creative that's better suited for performance campaigns. What that means is having an array of different ads so a brand can speak to every customer at the right point in the funnel, as well as test and change it along the way.

Goldenberg describes the ideal creative approach as being inspired by design thinking. Working under an established visual style, different customized assets that are consistent with the brand – but iterated based on what would drive different segments to an action – can be created.

For example, a campaign Abacus worked on for Nickelodeon aimed to drive traffic to retail partners that stocked products based on the kids network's properties. The design team created ads that were consistent with the look and animation style of the shows, but customized to each niche audience being targeted and what would drive them to stores, all while iterating the approach based on results throughout the campaign.

"We think of it as a layer between the brand, which is static, and the campaign, which is disposable," he says. He adds many CDs have been resistant to provide creative suited to this approach as it's an inversion of how traditional creative is done.

"Instead of running your brand spot and hoping performance happens, you can run performance and accrue brand over time."

"The interesting part about performance is that it's always a new day," Thompson adds.

"Your competition may have

regrouped, adopted a new strategy or push, or are now competing on dollars in a different way – but if you focus on audience, context and the data sets you own and you start to understand what influences them, you are better set up for success."



"MOST MARKETERS ARE TOTALLY NEGATING THE ADVANTAGES THAT DATA GIVES THEM."





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EACH OF THIS YEAR'S SHOPPER Innovation + Activation winners hyped up their brands with creative, and effective, strategies, ranging from a clothing line for chips to chocolate bars for the munchies. But there can be only one Hypebeast King and so the Grand Prix crown went to No Frills and Dentsu Media for charting a new path-to-purchase with the "Haulers" campaign, created by John St.

A discount grocer isn't usually seen as a baller, but when you think about it – what's more baller than getting a deal on your groceries? "Haulers" turned No Frills into a grocer with swagger, and drove traffic and sales, to boot.

Cossette was also a big winner at the SIAs, taking the most Gold trophies (five) for the Egg Farmers of Canada, Tweed, McDonald's and SickKids.

This year, the annual program rebranded with a new name to deepen its activation lens. The gala took place at Toronto's Arcadian Court on April 29, during *strategy's* two-day Shopper Marketing Forum. A total of 49 programs and partnerships were awarded 87 medals, while the Retail Innovator of the Year prize went to Quebec's SAQ.

Turn the page to read about the best shopper work that broke through, and won a few SIAs along the way.

CASES **BY** JENNIFER HORN



What's all the hype about?

Hype culture is spreading faster than butter on oven-fresh bread.

It's a phenomenon driven by sneaker kids and their obsession with 2 a.m. lineups for exclusive shoe drops. But, as some SIA-winning brands have shown, the trend is not only for the streetwear crowd. Brands of all shapes and sizes – a grocer, QSR, CPG, and a whiskey brand – have built new cred via a mountain of hype.

No one puffs itself up better than **No Frills**. It snagged the Grand Prix (plus a Gold Reinvention) for not only rebranding its discount self with a degree of exclusivity, but for remaking its shoppers into the best “**Haulers**” (read: value conscious) they can be.

The retailer is a destination for smart shopping, particularly in the age of low-disposable income. It wanted bargain-hunting millennials to never feel ashamed for being value-driven. Rather, they should celebrate their savviness and wear it as a badge of honour. Working with **Dentsu** on nonconformist media swagger and **John St.** on creative, No Frills created a movement to become one of Canada's hottest brands.

No Frills' pumped up marketing was seen everywhere. Those looking to get a lot (for less) were first teased with unbranded social content and wild postings on the street. Next, the grocer dropped an album record, music video and clothing collection. And finally, a commercial that revealed the culprit behind the slick drops showed attitude – not prices – through its parkour-happy customers.

No Frills set out to feel more like a lifestyle brand than a grocer, and that it did. As a result, the company increased its traffic by 13.7% and improved sales by 3% just after debuting its hot new look.

McDonald's did not drop a hot album for the promotion of its hot burger. However, that didn't stop the Gold Design and Bronze Integration winner from imitating the delirium that happens pre-launch.

Working with **Cossette**, the brand targeted younger “trendsetters” for the

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Opposite page: No Frills celebrated “Haulers,” via a TV spot that had plenty of swagger.

Above: McDonald's hyped its Big Mac with Bacon via the “BMxB” ad that mocked fashion collabs.

Top, bottom right: Doritos gave its Ketchup chips street cred with a streetwear collection.



return of its Big Mac with Bacon. This target gets satisfaction from being the first to discover something, so the campaign was designed to feel like an exclusive album drop.

Purposely unbranded, the “BMxB” logo quietly appeared on wild postings, billboards, and banner ads. McD's partnered with “hip” clothing stores to tease the mysterious “collaboration” in its windows; while influencers and a TV spot threw to a website that

featured only a countdown to the burger's launch.

All was finally revealed at an exclusive preview event and the original OOH switched to reveal the collaboration between the Big Mac and Bacon. All of which led to a 13% jump in Big Mac sales, with the BMxB meal making up 24% of the increase.

As these campaigns show, the more rare something is, the more people covet it. That's the credo of hype culture. Silver Path to Purchase/Out of Store winner **PepsiCo** also wanted a piece of the excitement behind an exclusive collection, so it dropped one of its own.

Canadians have a deep love and affection for **Doritos Ketchup** chips. But, in 2017, sales for the limited-time flavour sunk below projections, as fewer people were purchasing the once-adored potato chip. The brand had lost the sense of scarcity that made it so appealing.

So to re-ignite its exclusivity, **BBDO** treated the annual Ketchup launch like a popular streetwear brand would – with an exclusive branded clothing and accessories line.

An authentic approach was going to make the chip collection a success: because to look like a real streetwear brand, Doritos Ketchup needed to act like one too. The PepsiCo brand released a lookbook with actual artists and fashion influencers as models. The collection was then released weekly at DoritosDrop.ca and promoted across social.

Turns out, the collection was covetable enough to get coverage from style pubs and blogs, earning more than 89 million impressions valued at over \$1.5 million. The “**Doritos Ketchup Drop**” campaign also dramatically increased repeat purchases by 7%, while overall sales exceeded the brand's forecast by 15%.

SPONSORSHIP SWAGGER

Celebrating its legacy of being at the heart of pop culture, **Jack Daniel's** approached its NBA sponsorship with an idea that brought the swagger of the basketball association together with the coolness of Jack.

The Hive's Bronze Sponsorship-winning idea was to create an event that was equal parts NBA and Jack Daniel's. The team embraced a cultural cue that's common among both brands: tattoos. Ink can be found on almost every player in the NBA, telling the stories of commitment and perseverance – similar values of Jack Daniel's. The two partners invited basketball fans to celebrate the game and the players at “**Whiskey & Ink**,” a gallery-style event that boasted photographs telling the stories of seven players and their tattoos. The event also included a meet-and-greet with NBA player Mo Williams, live tattooing, a DJ, and, of course, Jack Daniel's cocktails. “Whiskey and Ink” also had a presence online, with content featuring interviews with the players.

Going beyond creating traditional branded swag helped Jack Daniel's exceed engagement targets with the NBA audience and challenge perceptions of it being seen as a dated, rock-and-roll brand.



Data is in the (loyalty) pudding



Clockwise: La Cage's revamped loyalty program uses reams of data to make dining more personal; Le Club AccorHotels also looked beyond points to create a data-driven luxury experience; Loblaws merged two popular loyalty programs to become PC Optimum.

Big data is a big part of modern-day loyalty, and there's plenty to go around. Three SIA winners showed they were able to successfully distill reams of data, creating highly personalized shopping, dining and travel experiences.

Quebec sportsbar chain **La Cage Brasserie Sportive** was feeling a little outdated a few years ago, so it spent some time modernizing its brand, menu and restaurant ambiance. One of the things it tried to do more as a result of the rebrand was to adopt a more local approach.

La Cage already had a loyalty program, but it needed to be updated with that personalized positioning in mind. So, working with **Lg2**, it redesigned Club Cage to move away from being a classic loyalty program (with a standard points system) to something a little more customizable and, naturally, rewarding.

The restaurant made the new Club Cage program focus wholly on the customer. It created a data-centric program (which won a Gold in CRM & Loyalty) that made menu recommendations based on the data it had on its customers. La Cage can also determine where its customers prefer to sit, what their favourite beer is, or which sports team they like to watch on the restaurant's TV screens, assisting them the minute they enter its doors.

Similarly, **Le Club AccorHotels** also wanted to move beyond a "collecting points" mentality with the launch of its new loyalty program. AccorHotel's guests are wealthy world-travelers that value experiences over rewards. So collecting points for a free night stay is not the most compelling idea. Instead, the hotel designed something that would show it understands guests' desires, even before they do. In other words, it set out to read customers' minds.

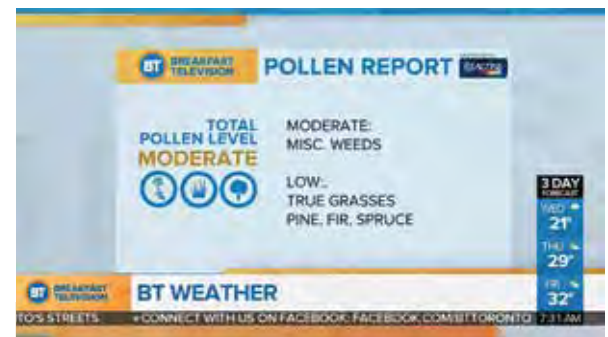
Taking home a Silver CRM & Loyalty, Silver Experiential, Silver Original Idea and Silver Tech Breakthrough, "**Seeker**" was launched as the world's first biometric discovery tool for destination planning. Working with **Cossette**, it used biometric data to reveal what hotel guests desire when it comes to travel experiences. At a live event, people were invited to wear a wristband and headset that

recorded their brainwaves and pulse while being shown images. Their experiences were filmed and then used to promote the rewards program and how Le Club takes luxury to a whole new level.

While maybe not as flashy as biometric feedback, **Loblaws**'s consolidation of its loyalty program PC Plus (with eight million members) and Shoppers Optimum (with 11 million) was certainly a massive data undertaking.

Research showed that customers prefer the convenience of having a single loyalty program for all of their purchases, across pharmacy and grocery. The company needed to bring together the two programs in a way that would allow it to track customers' shopping behaviour under its entire family of brands.

Eagle Eye and Loblaws worked to create the new **PC Optimum**, which now connects data across every single touchpoint: POS, online and social. The platform sends points, discounts or promotions specific to each individual, in real-time, based on shopper insights now available to Loblaws following the consolidation of the two programs. As a result, PC Optimum – which walked away with a Bronze in Data – is projected to process more than half a billion transactions annually and distribute \$1 billion in loyalty value.



REAL-TIME AVERSIONS AND ALERTS

When allergies strike, nothing else matters except getting relief and getting it fast.

Using data from three media partners, **Reactine** showed it's got allergy sufferers' back by telling them when and where allergies were about to strike.

Reactine and **UM** redesigned The Weather Network app's home screen to include a Reactine "**Pollen Alert**" (which won a Silver Integration) report to show local pollen levels. It also inserted an alert feed into *Breakfast Television*'s live Weather Report and targeted YouTube users in cities with six-second video bumper alerts.

Reactine strengthened its #1 share position at retail, widening the gap with its nearest rival as a result of the data-driven program.

Shiny healthy people

The perimeter of the grocery store is getting a lot more action these days, as plant-based eating and zero-waste shopping steamrolls into retail. Younger gens opt for holistic health over material things, making it the new luxury. But what if your brand's product has always aligned with this growing demand?

Over the past few years, butter products have been deemed more "natural" and have consequently eroded **Becel's** value proposition. But, surprise, surprise: Becel has been using plant-based oils for the last 40 years. Consumers can participate in the hot health movement just by using its spread – a message the brand set out to broadcast far and wide.

Working with **Mindshare**, Becel partnered with Corus, as well as "vegan-ish" influencer Jillian Harris and dietitian Tori Wesszer to get people cooking with its product. The two came up with plant-based recipes and tips for online and in-store, while the brand brought those meals to life through a pop-up resto, called PLNT. There, everything was made from plants: the furniture, the decor, the dinner ware and, of course, the food.

For a declining category, the Silver Acting on Insights-winning "**Power of Plants**" campaign turned the tide for Becel: sales volume improved from a decline of 1% to an increase of 6%.

Faced with similar category declines – beer consumption fell 4.5% from 2011 to 2016 – **Michelob** stole the wellness show, with a campaign that positioned its Ultra product as a "fitness beer."

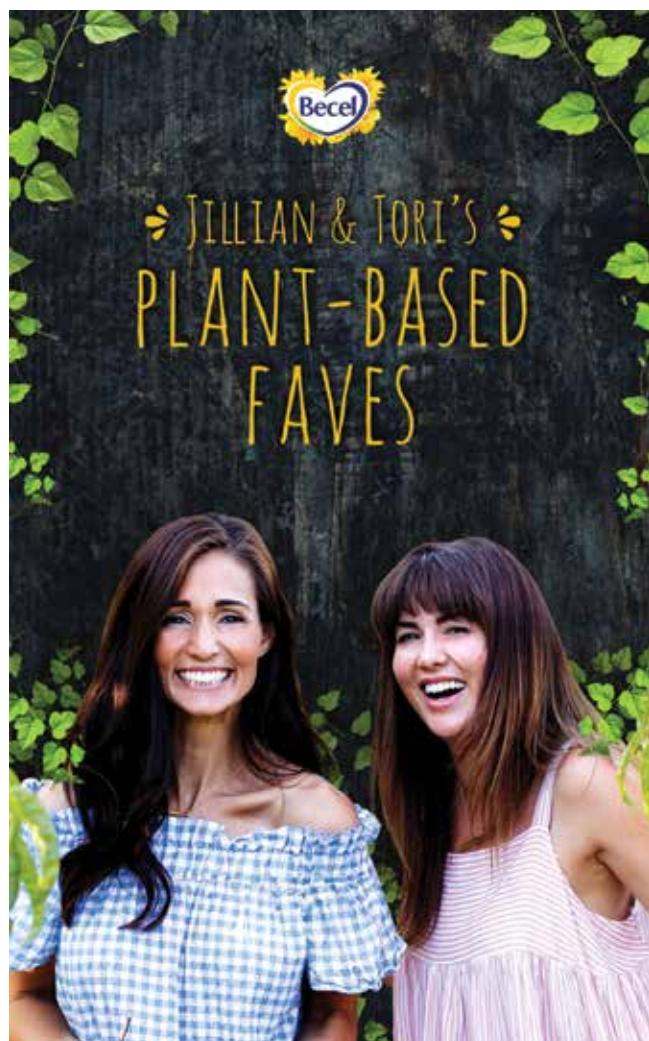
Beer's biggest rival is wine. Sitting at about 123 calories, wine tends to win over health-conscious consumers. But that's nothing Michelob's 80-calorie Ultra beer can't overcome. It went head-to-head with the preferred drink for active health-conscious folk, showing imagery of Ultra smashing wine's higher calorie count (and subsequently consumer perceptions). Creative by **FCB** also showed the crushing weight of wine in billboards, elevator wraps, TSAs and online.

Michelob Ultra brought the idea of fitness and beer together and subsequently moved from the 44th to the 3rd fastest growing beer in Canada in just one year. And the campaign took home a Silver Acting on Insights award.

There's ample room for brands outside of food/beverage to tap into today's health craze. **Enercare** is one of them.

All heating and cooling companies focus on service and price, but Enercare decided to show that it can offer "home health." It used the wellness trend as a way to get consumers thinking about a different kind of health: the air and water quality in their homes.

Working with **BIMM**, Enercare went beyond traditional print tactics to create a Gold Custom Retail and Gold Out of the Box Retail pop-up, called **Kare**, which sold nothing but the purest H2O and O2, all bottled in packaging that promised improved health. Hidden cameras inside the pop-up captured people's reactions to the ridiculous products. The video footage was later shared online, which helped increase sales 24%, and proved that a healthy home makes for a happy homeowner.



Top: Becel tapped Tori Wesszer and Jillian Harris to reach out to vegan and 'vegan-ish' consumers.

Middle: Michelob branded its new Ultra offering as a low-cal fitness beer.

Bottom: Enercare also focused on wellness by promoting home health.





From old perceptions to new realities

REIMAGINING PRODUCTS

Get people to chow down on more eggs, more often. Convince them that anything bad tastes good with Tabasco. Find a way to get sports game junkies to trade chips for Reese Mix. And get cannabis consumers to think of Oh Henry! as the go-to for their, er, sudden hunger pangs. Sometimes, some brands will go straight to the source to challenge product perceptions.

For the **Egg Farmers of Canada**, the problem it faced was that people were choosing not to make eggs for breakfast during the time-starved week, instead saving them for the time-filled weekends. The solution was to make eggs sound like they're actually less work to make than people are hardwired to think.

Working with **Cossette**, the organization created a fictitious new product called "**Weekday Eggs**" (that were, of course, just regular eggs) and positioned them as a quick solution for busy mornings.

The team promoted "Weekday Eggs" as a groundbreaking innovation in a TV spot that actually poked fun at the concept, while also showing how fast and easy eggs are to make. A food truck served samples to people on their way to work and school. And recipes and time-saving tips were housed on a dedicated website.

Encouraging people to rethink their habits unlocked more egg-eating occasions and, as a result, five million more eggs were sold during the campaign period. As a result, the campaign nabbed three SIA Golds for Acting on Insights, Awareness & Trial Breakthrough, and

Changing Behaviour, as well as a Silver Reinvention.

From how to make eggs, to what many put on eggs, **Tabasco** is a sauce that's become a cooking staple. Over the past few years however, the hot sauce category has, well, heated up. But Tabasco is meant to awaken and elevate flavours, not bully them with blatant spiciness, like many of its competitors do.

Just like "WeekDay Eggs," the Tabasco "**One Star Restaurant**" campaign (which won a Bronze Awareness & Trial Breakthrough) reimagined everyday meals. The brand and **Rethink** tapped Montreal chef Jean-Michel Leblond to demo the flavour-enhancing power of the sauce. Leblond transformed the worst-rated takeout food into four-star dishes with just a few drops of Tabasco. It then opened a one-day pop-up, serving the plates to unsuspecting patrons.

The mystery meals sold out in less than an hour, and customers were invited to rate their experience on Yelp. The experiment was, of course, documented and shared in a video, which quickly gained traction as it was picked up by Montreal influencers and news sites.

Thanks to its popular hunger platform, Snickers is the first bar to come to millennials' minds when they're ravenous. But **Oh Henry!** wanted to be seen as the #1 hunger bar among the younger (cannabis-consuming) generation, which it attempted to do by addressing a major pain point: the munchies.

There was no product on shelves that specifically tackled cannabis-induced hunger. So, with the help of **Anomaly**, the brand created a

Clockwise: The Egg Farmers of Canada made a case for egg convenience; Oh Henry! 4:25 bars tapped into the cannabis craze; Reese Mix stole the sports game show; Montreal's Little Italy had people cheering for "Anyone but Sweden"; Scotiabank Arena worked hard to become a household name; Montreal wooed its lost love, Quebec City; and Tabasco brought spice back into the kitchen.



new Oh Henry! bar, specially formulated for the intense hunger that hits five minutes after 4:20. Chocolate was stripped away and peanuts added, resulting in seven grams of protein to take on the munchies.

To make the connection to cannabis clear on shelves, the team switched up the packaging colour from Oh Henry!'s yellow to a new green, while cannabis slang was also added to the package alongside the ingredients list. People could first sample **Oh Henry! 4:25** bars at a branded dispensary in Toronto's Kensington Market. Later, one million bars were rolled out across the country, along with a national campaign aimed at marijuana enthusiasts. Not surprisingly, Oh Henry! 4:25 sold out before the campaign was even done – one of the reasons it won a Gold Targeting and a Silver Brand New! at the SIA awards.

Similarly, **Reese Mix** had to find a way to shake people out of the habit of reaching for a competitor during a prime snacking occasion.

Nothing goes better with sports than chips. Which means Reese Mix is sort of an underdog when it comes to game time snacking. Chips dominate the scene, and so the brand needed to give sports fans a reason to break their routine and choose its salty-and-sweet snack. Enter the Reese Mix **"Breakaway Bowl"** by **Anomaly**.

Built with proprietary technology and 3D-printed custom parts, the interactive bowl was designed to lock a viewer out of their snacks until game time. The Bronze Tech Breakthrough-winning "Breakaway Bowl" was synced to every game of the Stanley Cup Playoffs, opening up only when the puck dropped and locking again after the final buzzer. Everyone was talking about the bowl during the playoffs, enough so that the brand tracked over 32,000 consumer engagements, 1.2 million video views and 13 million impressions.

RETHINKING PLACES

Much like opinions, it's not easy changing a habit. Particularly not one that's been ingrained for the last 20 years.

Therein lay the monster challenge **Scotiabank** faced when it struck a deal with MLSE to take over the naming rights of then-Air Canada Centre in late 2017. It would take a tremendous amount of time before Canadians would, naturally, use **Scotiabank Arena** in conversation – 20 months to be precise, as the bank's research showed. But, thanks to a fierce communications strategy, the bank brand is projected to become a household name in just 13.5 months.

With the help of **Bensimon Byrne**, the brand worked with MLSE to update the 1,000-plus arena and city signs, as well as every location tag that exists on social media. Out-of-home and search ads were changed to display the new name, as were branch wraps and in-arena boards.

Scotiabank also celebrated its new sports home with fans by giving out free rides to get there. By partnering with Metrolinx, it created the first-ever branded Presto card, bearing the new **Scotiabank Arena** moniker and ID.

The rebranding push won three SIA Bronzes for Awareness & Trial Breakthrough, Partnering and Sponsorships. Today, social awareness already matches that of the Rogers Centre, which is in its 13th year of sponsorship.

The city of Montreal faced its own unique branding challenge. It wasn't that its neighbours in Quebec City were apathetic, it's that they really didn't like Montreal. Actually, they sorta love to hate the city, what with its traffic, construction, potholes and non-existent parking.

The insight for **Tourisme Montréal's "I've Changed"** campaign by **Lg2** was anything but scientific, it was emotional. Just like an old flame, Quebec City needed to fall in love with Montreal again.

Montreal's love for Quebec City was declared with a geo-targeted campaign, in which Montreal claimed it had "changed" in billboards, newspapers, TV and radio ads. It even sent 100,000 letters to Quebec City residents' homes.

Montreal had just marked its 375th with a birthday bash, so new restaurants that opened during the celebrations claimed they were actually trying to win Quebec City's heart through "her" stomach. The campaign generated four million impressions, one million video views and helped increase bookings by 5.4%.

In a similar rivalry vein, Montreal's Little Italy set out to bring thousands of soccer fans together under the guise of their dislike for a team from another country: Sweden.

During FIFA World Cup 2018, Italian fans gather in the Montreal neighbourhood to cheer for their beloved national team in cafés, bars and restaurants. Business booms as street traffic and sales explode. But in 2018, for the first time in 60 years, the Italian team failed to qualify for the competition, as it was defeated by Sweden. As a result, local businesses expected a decrease in interest amongst soccer fans.

Montreal's Little Italy and **Rethink** put a spotlight on the neighbourhood and invited Montrealers to come watch the games, even if their favourite team couldn't play.

With tongue-in-cheek wit, Little Italy invited fans to cheer for **“Anyone But Sweden.”**

The Gold Seasonal & Event Success and Gold Small Budget, Big Impact-winning campaign came to life through multiple touchpoints, from in-bar ads to a scarf that was made using all of the participating countries' flags (except for Sweden, naturally).

The campaign was a success, with hundreds of user content shared and businesses enjoying a busier season than expected.

So the **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)** worked alongside **Zulu Alpha Kilo** to create a cultural shift.

Winning two Public Service awards – a Silver Reinvention and a Bronze Integration – **“Mental Health is Health”** confronted injustices by questioning why society treats mental and physical health so differently. Billboards, transit posters and social posts posed pointed questions, such as “Why do some illnesses get treatment but others get judgment?”

The campaign has already challenged outdated perceptions, with the organization tracking 70 million earned impressions. Online donations also increased 41% year-over-year.

While a lack of empathy drove CAMH to inspire change for mental health, a lack of acceptance is what drove **Gender Creative Kids** to make the world a more accepting place for trans youth.

The organization created Sam, a toy designed to help youth understand what it's like to grow up transgender.

The **“You Inside Project”**



Left to right: CAMH questions the double standard that exists around mental and physical health; Gender Creative Kids found a creative way to visually show the journey of a transgender person.

REFRAMING SOCIAL ISSUES

Sadly, many have a hard time accepting what they cannot see or relate to: mental illness and gender identity, in particular, are regularly misunderstood by those who have not spent a day in an anxious or transgender person's shoes.

Mental illness is one of Canada's most pressing issues. Yet, few Canadians believe that to be true. Many don't believe it's as important as physical health.

by **Lg2** acted as an educational program in schools, with a short film promoting the toy. The facial expressions in both the film and Sam convey different emotions at each stage, allowing children to understand what he is feeling at each step, and why.

The campaign (which won three Public Service awards, including Gold Acting on Insights, Gold Design and Silver Original Idea) earned \$104,500 to fund the production of 500 toys, and Sam has ignited millions of conversations about what it means to grow up transgender.

NEW (OLD) PEOPLE

The nature of retirement is changing as people live longer. But society still thinks of the retired as needing to downsize, as they live off their savings. A campaign from **HomeEquity Bank** and **Zulu Alpha Kilo** proves this isn't true, as the rebranded bank set out to champion the reverse mortgages category.

An overwhelming majority (93%) of people over 65 say it's important to



be able to stay in their home during retirement. HomeEquity presented this sentiment in campaign that aimed to change seniors' shady perceptions of reverse mortgage products. In

commercials, it showed older Canadians as being in charge of their lives, “urging” millennials and real estate agents to back off in lawn signs and door clings.

Since launch, the **“There's No Retirement Like Home”** campaign has helped the bank to drive up awareness by 19%, with enquiries for its services increasing 10%. It also picked up a Bronze Integration, Bronze Reinvention and Bronze Targeting at the SIA awards.

Store-driving designs

CONSONANT SKINCARE

Consonant was moving into a new retail location on Toronto's Queen Street. To launch and drive traffic, **Zulu Alpha Kilo** created ambient posters applied to walls, sidewalks and lamp posts on the street, each with exposed textures – including concrete, brick, plywood and stone. The poster caption read, "If your skin feels like this, visit us on June 30th." By highlighting natural elements, the brand could speak to the skincare needs its products address. As a result, it saw higher sales than two previous store openings, and took home three SIA awards: a Silver Path to Purchase/ Out-of-Store, Silver Small Budget, Big Impact and Bronze Original Idea.

RGD

The **Association of Registered Graphic Designers (RGD)** needed to get the attention of the toughest audience: designers. So it worked with **Zulu Alpha Kilo** to create an identity for RGD's conference, tapping into the stereotypes and clichés associated with design: such as the fact that designers would rather obsess over a typeface than read what it says. Design truths were turned into clever headlines as part of a "**Speak the Truth**" campaign, which came to life in the form of posters, lanyards, T-shirts and bags. It passed the design critique, as attendance was up 15% in 2018 and won a Silver Design SIA award.

MCDONALD'S

While **McDonald's** is one of the most recognizable brands, its signs are surprisingly inconsistent. So the QSR took a simple approach to make finding its nearest store, well, simple. For "**Follow the Arches**," which won a Bronze Design, **Cossette** helped create



Clockwise: Yellow smartphones double up as McDonald's fries to announce its "Mobile Menu"; simple wayfinding billboards were created for diners to find McD's stores; RGD tells designers the cold, hard truth about their craft; Raising the Roof's transparent toque packaging makes it clear where donations go; Consonant Skincare used the urban jungle as the canvas for its new Queen St. W. shop; Montreal chef Stefano Faita created locally inspired packaging to stand out in a sea of sauce.

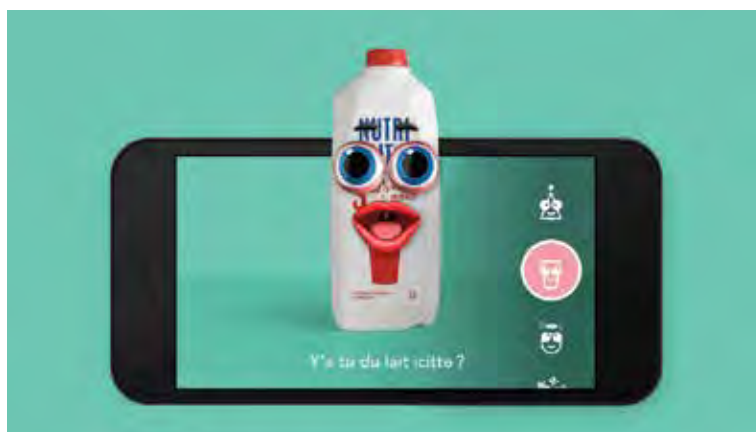
a wayfinding system, using the brand's golden arches as directional paths to drive traffic to stores. Simplicity also played a role in the brand's "**Mobile Menu**." The team took McD's menu items and recreated them using the unmistakable shape of a smartphone. French fries, a Big Mac and the classic Egg McMuffin made up the "Mobile Menu" of stacked devices that ran as ads letting people know that mobile ordering is now a thing, and won a Silver Design as a result.

TOMATO SAUCES BY STEFANO FAITA

Stefano Faita, an Italian chef from Montreal's Little Italy, wanted to enter the retail space. So Faita and his partner, Michele Forgione, decided to launch a line of tomato sauces. In Quebec, though, the category is led by big brands. So packaging needed to work hard to break through. The founders decided to name the brand after Faita, who was a big personality within the culinary scene. His face was then turned into a caricature and placed on the **Tomato Sauces by Stefano Faita** packaging, along references to Montreal's Little Italy. The new brand's bright colours and bold typeface by **Lg2** helped it capture a 3.8% market share, the fourth largest of the category. It also won a Silver Packaging at the SIAs.

RAISING THE ROOF

For a kid on the brink of homelessness, someone buying a toque from **Raising the Roof** could mean access to food, a safe place to go, or a fresh start. To show this, **Leo Burnett** designed Bronze Design-winning wrappers, overlaid with graphics that visually transformed toques into demonstrations of how people's donations help prevent homelessness. The wrappers depict what each toque really buys – a shower, a meal, an education. So when people shop for a toque, they can see that they're really shopping for a solution.



Sensorial stunts

Clockwise: Canada Goose parkas proved their worth in "The Cold Room"; The Quebec Milk Producers connected with families through singing cartons; Interval House, Fondation Émergence and Uniqlo used pop-ups to raise awareness and drive donations.

You eat with your eyes, you see with your brain, and you feel with your heart. Going to market with shopper programs that tickle the senses is a sound strategy for any brand wanting to engage with consumers beyond the rack. Just ask **Canada Goose**.

The parka brand adopted a "try before you buy" attitude with "**The Cold Room**" installation that was exactly that: a sub-zero chamber for shoppers to put Canada Goose jackets under a frigid stress test. Why? Because once you go Goose, you'll never want to let that parka loose.

The brand has found that people are more likely to purchase its coats after sampling them. But doing that inside an air-conditioned store wasn't enough, so it fast-tracked the process by allowing shoppers to test it in a cold zone. The 50-square-foot room features an adjustable thermostat, so people can control the temperature (between -18 and -25 degrees Celsius) to suit different environments from spring temps in Manitoba to winter in Ontario.

"The Cold Room" by **North Strategic**, which won a Bronze In-store Engagement, has since seen 30% of customers test the space when visiting five of the global stores that have the room.

Physical engagement of the senses is a strategy that works well, but there's also merit in digital engagement too, as proven by **Market & Co** and the **Quebec Milk Producers**.

The food market in the Upper Canada mall is unique as it allows shoppers to buy fresh items from 20 local merchants. For its launch,

the market and **Union** created "**Food That Sings**," a soundtrack for shoppers' ingredients. The idea was to encourage shopper interactions through a blanket program that touched all of its vendors.

In partnership with Spotify, the team developed scannable stickers and placed them on 20 products in the market. When scanned using their phones, a song would appear. For example, if they scanned a pint of ice cream at Sweet Jesus, they could play the song "Ice Ice Baby" by Vanilla Ice. More than 17,000 stickers were distributed during the first week of its opening, and in that month, the program saw 50,000 interactions (and also won a Silver In-Store Engagement SIA award).

Similarly, the Quebec Milk Producers and **Lg2** built a musical campaign that saw people interact with food using their mobile device.

Developed in a rare collab with Quebec's major dairy brands, the "**Singing Cartons**" app used AR to display faces on cartons and give them a voice. It all went down during the holidays, a time when families come together, with the association looking to reinforce milk's place in Quebec homes. Up to five cartons formed a choir that sang Christmas songs, with over 150 cartons being detectable.

During the four-week festive season, the Bronze Seasonal & Event Success and Bronze Tech Breakthrough-winning app was downloaded 66,000 times and nearly 1.4 million songs were sung.

Pop-ups are another tried-and-true engagement tactic, adopted by brands to bring the store to the shopper, instead of vice versa. And they're hugely versatile, giving temporary space for those looking to build awareness, sell goods, or drive donations.

Global fashion retailer **Uniqlo** launched in Toronto back in 2016.



And while some Canadians are aware of the brand from their travels abroad, its presence in Canada was low. So to introduce itself, Uniqlo paid tribute to the country's most iconic garments – the flannel shirt.

The brand opened a completely empty store, and left it to Canadians to fill. Visitors received a Uniqlo flannel shirt and were given a choice: they could keep the shirt, or hang it up on the wall for a new Canadian.

Not surprisingly, 97% of Canadians decided to give up their shirt for a new Canadian.

The campaign, by **Rethink**, reached over 3.8 million through media picking up the film that documented the stunt, and Uniqlo picked up a Bronze Original Idea for the campaign at the SIAs.

Interval House, a shelter for abused women, also wanted to increase awareness, albeit of something with a much more serious tone. It used a pop-up to get more people talking about domestic abuse, which, for many women, can occur when a marriage begins. This troubling truth was brought to light through **"The Broken Bride Registry"** at a Canadian bridal show.

What appeared to be a standard wedding registry, was actually a statement on spousal abuse, with shocking items like "Jealous Rage Bandages," "Cigarette Burn Cream," and the "Don't Talk Back Arm Sling." At the booth, people could pick up a scanner to scan the items and unlock true stories of abuse. They could then add Interval House to their own bridal registry, providing a unique way for newlyweds to help those less fortunate.

The Gold Experiential-winning campaign, created by **Union**, is still ongoing, but since launch, donations have increased 14%.

And finally, **Fondation Émergence** also used an installation to bring awareness to a cause close to its heart. Many people tend to forget that the LGBTQ+ community still face violence and discrimination in less developed nations. The non-profit decided to use the pride flag to create a **"Pride Shield"** that highlights the power of standing up against homophobia and transphobia together.

Working with **Rethink**, the team aligned 193 flags (the number of UN member countries) on wires and shot a .45 calibre bullet, travelling at 9,000 feet per second in a 400-yard warehouse. A single flag stood no chance against the bullet. But with each flag, the bullet lost power, eventually stopping in its tracks.

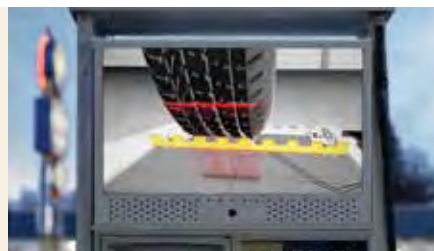
As a result, the installation took home a Gold Original Idea and Gold Reinvention at this year's SIAs.

A SURPRISE ENGAGEMENT

All brands strive to get people to stop in their tracks (or in this case, cars) by way of engaging stunts.

That was exactly the goal behind **Fountain Tire** and **FCB Canada's "Safest Highway,"** a data-driven program that engaged with unknowing Canadians to convince them to stock up on new tires from the retailer.

Replacing tires can be an annoyance, so much so that 50% of people will drive with at least one worn-out tire. Yet, worn tires account for over 26% of accidents in



poor driving conditions. So to encourage drivers to change their tires before it's too late, the team placed digital boards along a dangerous stretch of Alberta's Highway 44. The signs displayed the ice, snow, visibility, winds, and collisions using data from Waze, Twitter and Weather Network.

But it was the tire tread reader, which

was installed at a gas station near the highway's entrance to 3D-map vehicle tires, that really got driver's attention. The tech alerted those with unsafe tires and a Fountain Tire rep gave every driver a customized tire safety report: 31% of tires failed, which were replaced, free of charge.

The serious message worked, with local sales increasing 8% locally and 4% nationally. The campaign also won a Gold Original Idea, Gold Tech Breakthrough, Gold Experiential, Silver In-Store Engagement and a Silver Integration.



How to be direct

Clockwise: Scott's' painfully awkward (but real) customer testimonials; Snickers reached out directly to Toronto Raptors "Haters" with personalized bars; Volkswagen dealt with skeptics head-on. **Middle:** Cineplex went directly to movie-goers with timely email marketing.

These days, direct-to-consumer has many definitions. It's a retail channel and catch-all term for a hotbed of born-on-the-internet brands. It's also the literal act of going to consumers with merchandise via marketing (a.k.a the pop-up). The demarcation is blurring, but in each case, direct is the watchword and consumer response is the goal.

Several shopper programs succeeded in bringing the "activation" in SIA to the fore, including **Cineplex**, which used direct marketing to drive concession sales in its Bronze ROI-winning campaign.

In recent years, theatre attendance has been threatened by the rise of movie-streaming services like Netflix. So, as part of a larger business diversification strategy, Cineplex has been focusing on the pre-, during, and post-show experience.

Concession sales have, for the most part, been driven by trailers

in theatre. But the idea was to get customers thinking about concessions earlier, before they even sit down in their seats. Targeting those who had already purchased a ticket, the brand and **Conversion** emailed movie-goers one to two hours before each show. No special deals were offered, just a reminder to grab food or swag when they arrive, while VIP purchasers were invited to visit the lounge.

With a budget of \$30,000, the program tracked a 6.2% increase in concessions spend versus the target of 3% – which meant the program paid for itself within two weeks and confirmed the brand's hunch that customers don't always need special offers to convert.

Snickers also went straight to consumers, this time via social, for a program that went head-to-head with Raptors' "Haters." Working with **BBDO**, and as part of Snickers' partnership with the basketball team, the brand used its "You're not you when you're hungry" platform to call out fans who were questioning the Raptors when it made the playoffs.

With Twitter as the epicentre for basketball commentary, the brand used the platform to find Raptor fans who were doubting the team's



ability to win in the post-season. It then responded to the “hate” by turning naysayers’ tweets into personalized Snickers “Hater” bars and attaching pictures of them to the negative tweets. Those same bars were then sent to the haters so they could literally eat their words.

In one week, the Silver Targeting campaign tracked 3.9 million impressions. And not only did it rally support for the Raptors, it also reminded Canadians to eat Snickers (and not be a bunch of haters when they’re hungry).

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

It takes a mighty brave marketer to take their hands off the wheel and let customers do the driving.

Volkswagen learned to do exactly that following an emissions scandal that led to trust issues, with shoppers seeing the brand with a skeptical eye.

Consumers simply didn’t feel they could rely on the brand for honest answers. What’s more, people tend to plug their ears to brand communications, and instead rely on forums and ask friends about a car they’re researching.

So to get back in customers’ good books, VW and **TrackDDB** created the “Just Ask a Golf Driver” platform, which worked to provide shoppers with unbiased answers directly from real, and impassioned, drivers. Targeted ads caught the eye of Golf owners, and encouraged them to converse with prospective buyers on the site.

In one month alone, the hub (which nabbed a Gold CRM & Loyalty) saw more than 90,000 visits, with 30,000 questions and answers, which helped drive a 148% increase in requests for test drives.

While battling a less dire dilemma, **Scotts** and **Rethink** also collaborated with real customers to inject life back into the brand.

The lawn care company had just developed a product using natural herbicides, which killed weeds without harming grass or other plants around them. Consumers who had already used the product saw great success. Unfortunately real peoples’ real testimonials are really awful, so the brand embraced the awkwardness and recruited those happy customers for a TV campaign that had them give (comically awkward) testimonials.

The brand took people’s exact words from real reviews and turned them into official taglines for **Weed B Gon**. The testimonials were odd and the subjects rambled on, often not knowing what to say. But none of that mattered, because the takeaway was that the product worked.

As a result, during the campaign, Weed B Gon saw its strongest-selling month ever, with a 64% lift in sales. At the SIA awards, the campaign picked up a Silver Small Budget, Big Impact, as well as a Bronze Original Idea.



MAKING NEW AND OLD ACQUAINTANCES

Although Tylenol Complete is an established brand in China, the packaging looks different in Canada. As a result, newcomers end up switching to a different brand at retail.

Tylenol needed to reintroduce itself to new Chinese-Canadians by showing that it’s the same product they trust and can bring the comfort of home closer to them. A Bronze Targeting-winning campaign aligned Tylenol Complete to the audience’s biggest holiday: Chinese New Year, which is a celebration of good health and prosperity.

The brand tapped into ideas of home, love, and togetherness. The campaign, with media by **UM**, included pre-roll on iTalkBB, a top Chinese streaming service, as well as in *Sing Tao*, Canada’s largest Chinese language newspaper. The creative also showcased the number eight (which in Chinese culture is most associated with wealth and luck) to highlight Tylenol’s ability to fight eight cold and flu symptoms.

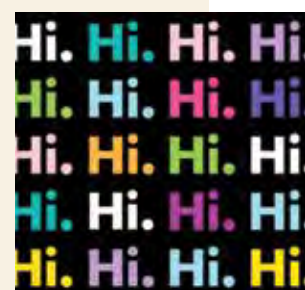
The targeted campaign drove newcomers to act, with the brand seeing a 22% increase in share performance inside ethnic stores versus non-ethnic.

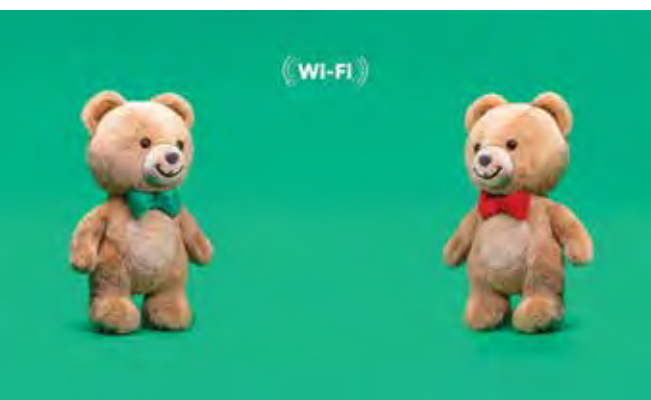
Tweed was also a stranger to Canadians prior to the legalization of cannabis. Its ambitious plan was to become a household name, and it did so by simply saying “Hi.”

In it’s race-to-market strategy, the brand looked to help Canadians push past the misconceptions of cannabis to truly understand how it can be a force for good. But first it introduced itself by explaining what Tweed is about and then helping to answer their burning questions.

Tweed worked with **Cossette** to say “Hi” on April 20 in restaurants, on the streets, and in bars. It also partnered with Live Nation to hook people up with tickets to events. And finally, it kept the conversation going by answering cannabis questions on its site, with the campaign winning a Gold Brand New!, a Silver Design and a Bronze Integration award.

Not only did Tweed address misconceptions, it also encouraged Canadians to be part of a new community and established itself as one of Canada’s largest cannabis brands.





Brands pay it forward

Clockwise: Kraft's life-size bear mascots connected the disconnected; Dove took its local self-esteem efforts abroad; Tim Hortons cheered on Kenya's lone hockey team; Dempster's gave its bread to those in need. **Opposite:** YWCA tackled violence against women, while Uber addressed impaired driving.

To get, you must give. Some CPG players found their groove in shopper programs that extolled the virtues of paying it forward. Many put up their hands, asking consumers to ride shotgun in charitable efforts to build young girls' self-esteem or bring families together.

One in three Canadians spend the holidays apart. This stunning statistic led to the insight for **Kraft Peanut Butter's "100,000 Hugs for SickKids."**

Working with **Rethink**, the brand turned its beloved characters Crunchy and Smoothie into physical bears that connected loved ones across Canada. The WiFi-enabled bears could send hugs to each other anywhere in the world. When one is hugged, it activates the other by lighting up the bear's bow-tie. The Bronze Partnering program began with a live stunt in Toronto and Vancouver, where the two 10-foot bears could be hugged in both cities. Regular-sized bears were also given to the crowd, one for a person to keep, the other to give to a loved one.

To really drive the idea home, it partnered with SickKids and put Canadians' hugs

(which were given on social channels via #KraftBearHugs) to good use. For every hug, \$1 was donated to the hospital.

The goal was to collect 100,000 hugs. In under six hours, it had collected over 400,000. And thanks to a grassroots campaign by K-pop band, BTS, the campaign went global and the final hug count clocked in at over two million.

Dove, too, rallied shoppers to help its mission to support a cause close to its heart: inspiring self-esteem in young people. The Unilever brand encouraged people to "**Pay Confidence Forward**" by purchasing its products at Shoppers Drug Mart and potentially step outside their comfort zone.

Through a partnership with WE Charity and its social enterprise ME to WE, **Team Unilever Shopper** and **Geometry** created a contest that encouraged moms and their daughters to enter for the chance to win a trip to a developing country, such as India, where they could help promote confidence among young girls.

In the Bronze Custom Retail-winning program, Dove reached Canadians before they

visited Shoppers via mobile, social and digital ads, and reminded them of the program in-store and at shelf, through handouts and merchandising. There were more than 200 entries to participate (20% more than last year for a similar program), and the program garnered six million impressions in the end.

While giving back can involve donating your time to travel across an ocean, it can be just as effective through the simple act of buying a lunch.

For over 100 years, **Dempster's** has been made by Canadians for Canadians. And one of its goals has been to fight against one of the country's biggest issues: hunger.

Every month, more than 850,000 Canadians turn to food banks for help. Dempster's decided to help nourish those who need it most through its "**Buy a Lunch, Give a Lunch**" program, where for every purchased product, two slices of bread would be donated to Canada's food banks.

To create awareness of the Bronze CSR program, Dempster's and **Cundari** partnered with *Amazing Race* to sponsor a Food Bank challenge, where they were able to highlight the issue of hunger to 3.2 million Canadians. Dempster's also promoted its message in-store, on TV and online. In the end, Dempster's was able to donate two million slices of bread to food banks, which led to a sales growth of 8% as two million incremental units were sold during the campaign.

FINDING PURPOSE IN CONTENT

When **Tim Hortons** wanted to drive love for its brand, the QSR used content to reinforce its credentials as a champion of hockey. And, in the process, it helped a small Kenyan hockey team in need.

There's just one ice hockey team in Kenya – the Ice Lions. The team has no one to play against, and so working with **Zulu Alpha Kilo**, the brand flew them to Canada so that they could compete against local league players.

Tims documented "**The Away Game**" (which won a Gold Original Idea and Silver Out of the Box Retail) and created different versions of the film for social. The video had four million views in the first four days and Sportsnet later aired an 18-minute version of the short film during primetime.

As a result, Tim Hortons saw a 3% lift in



store traffic during the month following the film's release – an extra 150,000 customers per day and 4.5 million guest visits per month. The QSR is now providing funding so that the Ice Lions can create a Kenya youth league and never have to play alone again.

Also taking a purposeful content approach, **Uber** partnered with **M.A.D.D.** for its own advocacy campaign during the holidays.

Zulu Alpha Kilo found Shelly, a woman who became an Uber driver after her daughter was killed by a drunk driver. The team followed her as Uber customers made their way home with Shelly, and documented their emotional conversations into a social video.

People are desensitized to ads that show the personal risks of impaired driving. And so working with a mother whose child was a victim to drunk driving meant being able to connect with people on a different level. Shelly's story reached 1.5 million Uber users through its app and the brand's fundraising goal of \$100,000 was achieved in less than three weeks, 11 days ahead of its target. The campaign also picked up a Gold Partnering and a Silver Experiential award.

And finally, in a campaign that was embedded in already-existing content, **YWCA** and **Rethink** got people talking about the sexualization of women and girls.

The world is filled with warnings, from newscasts to films. But on YouTube, there's nothing that warns youth about the content they're about to watch. The YWCA wanted them to be aware of how sexualization in pop-culture contributes to violence against women. So it hijacked music videos by placing a six-second warning before they played. The unskippable format of "**Six-Second Ambush Advisories**" also meant the warnings couldn't be ignored.

The YWCA's small-scale campaign (which picked up a Gold Targeting) showed why women's equality is more important now than ever before.

ALL IN FOR SICKKIDS

SickKids and **Cossette** get three SIA nods for campaigns that moved people to reach for their wallets and donate to the foundation's cause.

The "**All In**" iteration of SickKids' "**VS**" campaign began with a media event and an online film. The spot (which won a Gold ROI, Silver Integration, Bronze Acting on Insights and Bronze Design) showed Toronto kids working together towards the single goal of rebuilding the hospital. The city was also blanketed in OOH ads, from billboards to street car wraps, with the help of **UM**. From there, the team took the campaign to communities, with local businesses donating walls for murals that called for neighbourhoods to join the fight.

"**VS**" was successful in converting donors, however the foundation's prospect list was quite thin. People see SickKids as

more than just a hospital – for many patients, it's like family.

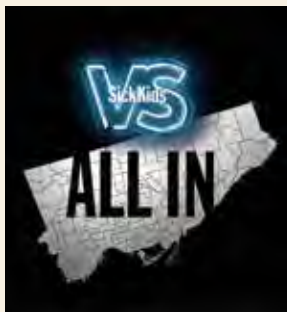
So the team created an online "**Family Tree**" to connect members of the SickKids clan, from patients to staff. The Gold

Data, Silver Targeting and Bronze Design-winning tree was about gathering data, not donations. When people signed up, it asked them to identify how they were connected to SickKids, which the foundation used to grow its list of new prospects.

And, finally, the hospital took another targeted approach, this time with radio.

"**Airtime**" encouraged companies to donate a portion of their radio advertising to spread the word about what SickKids

is doing to fight Cystic Fibrosis. Hasbro, Telus, Mercedes and McDonald's participated (which won a Silver Original Idea and Silver Partnering award), and the team created four radio ads, showcasing each partner and narrated by SickKids patients.



SAQ deepens engagement for Inspire

The 2019 Retail Innovator of the Year's bigger omnichannel play.

BY CHRIS LOMBARDO



Above left: SAQ's Inspire card.
Right: The retailer is bridging its digital loyalty program with the shopping experience in-store via a redesigned app.

When Société des alcools du Québec (SAQ) first launched Inspire in 2015, some skeptical media outlets debated the merits (and motivations) of a monopoly-owned loyalty program. However, when speaking with the *Montreal Gazette* at the time, SAQ's then-chief exec Alain Brunet noted that Inspire wasn't created only in the name of loyalty – but also efficiency. The Crown corp's thinking was to reinvest its mass marketing

dollars (taken from print media, such as flyers and newsprint) into a far more targeted platform, so that it can “know our customers better and adapt to their needs.”

And that it does: a whopping 2.3 million Quebecers, in a market of just 4.5 million, have since signed onto the program, and are now responsible for 70% of dollars spent at SAQ.

Quebec is considered a *société distincte*. The same can be said about SAQ when it comes to using big data to inform its shopper experience. After spending the last four years collecting data on its shoppers, Ariane de Warren, brand and marketing manager, customer experience, says the next step was to align the digital program with in-store. It was precisely that omnichannel approach that led *strategy* to name SAQ the 2019 Retail Innovator of the Year.

Last June, SAQ installed terminals in aisles, which customers use to look up their “taste profile” and previous purchases. They can also check product inventory via the terminals in real-time. The in-store screens, de Warren says, offer the advantages of the app, but can also be used by Inspire advisors to look up a buyer's purchase history and taste profiles to assist in store. De Warren stresses that it “complements in-store advice, but it does not replace it” and says the retailer continues to speak to the importance of product advisors through its messaging.

On the digital side, SAQ also redesigned its app to

offer more personalized content and access to tastings, trips and offers, all linked through the Inspire program. It added “Taste Tags,” which help members navigate the sometimes complicated (and intimidating) world of wine. The colour-coded gustatory preferences help a user find a wine they prefer, based on online questionnaires. SAQ will occasionally push related Inspire points offers, with banner ads placed above the “Taste Tag” results. Because of this, de Warren says the Quebec liquor retail system can better determine what a consumer wants before they even enter a physical store.

The retailer also created a “New Arrivals for Me”

feature, with customized offers in its weekly newsletter, which Inspire members can sign up for. It includes week-long online presales, followed by in-store offers. The idea is to cater to fans of SAQ's Signature and Cellier products, de Warren says, so they no longer have to travel to a specific store to purchase limited products; rather, they can choose from an offer and have it delivered to their local SAQ.

According to PWC Canada, retailers benefit from engaging with consumers through things beyond points – advice SAQ has followed as it hosts more events in partnership with its vendors, says De Warren.

Partnering with the Institut de tourisme et d'hôtellerie du Québec, SAQ recently offered an

eight-course meal at the Port of Montréal's Grand Quay for 400 Inspire members. The retailer also worked with Hendrick's Orbium gin to offer a hot-air balloon ride in Montreal, complete with samples and gifts.

De Warren says while the retailer used to focus on flyer advertising, now it concentrates on “omnichannel, digitalization and personalization, the relevant tools to reach younger consumers.”

With Inspire, the taxpayer-owned retailer proves innovation can prevail in a non-competitive market. By incorporating Inspire across its retail enterprise, SAQ has successfully upped its omnichannel game. **S**



SIA | JURY

Thanks to the 2019 Shopper Innovation + Activation Awards jury, which deliberated over comprehensive case studies to choose this year's winners.

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THE WALMART EFFECT

WHEN THE AMERICAN CHAIN ARRIVED ON CANADA'S SHORES IN 1994, THE RESPONSE FROM LOCAL RETAIL WAS ANYTHING BUT SERENE. IT WAS A ROUGH RIDE, BUT THE BIG-BOX STORE HELD ITS OWN BY STRESSING ITS CANADIAN CHARACTER, CUSTOMER-FIRST MANTRA AND INVESTING IN THE PLANET.

BY RAE ANN FERA

Clockwise: "Wilf" greeted Canadians in 1994 with its first TV spot; Walmart's dedication to moms is real; PenguinPickup and Instacart brings click-and-collect and grocery delivery to the chain; a Walmart store draws a crowd; its 25th anniversary logo; a Thanksgiving campaign promotes online grocery options.

It's hard to imagine a Canadian retail landscape without Walmart. Since its debut here in March 1994, the Arkansas-headquartered company has set the gold standard for big-box discount retailers by importing its concept of "Service with a Smile."

But it's easy to forget that when Sam Walton's superstore came to Canada, the welcome wasn't exactly warm. "Walmart crossed the 49th parallel and brought with it both folklore and fear to the Canadian marketplace," says retail consultant Tony Chapman of its entrance 25 years ago this spring.

The folklore was the story of its baseball-cap wearing founder who reinvented retail in 1962 in Rogers, Arkansas. The fear, he says, was that the company's

strategy of targeting small towns, which were largely ignored by the day's big players, like Sears and Woolworth, would eviscerate local retail. So, when Walmart purchased Canada's last remaining 122 Woolco department stores and set out to bring low prices and Southern charm north of the border, the domestic industry feared it would be a death knell for Canadian retail as they knew it.

What many considered an American invasion, did indeed spell the demise of many independent retailers says Kenneth Wong, professor of marketing at Queen's University's Smith School of Business. But, it was largely small retailers' own doing "in cases where they didn't differentiate and tried to compete on price... It was often the victim's own fault for failing to take the abundant advice available about watching margins and not getting too caught up in the race for volume," says Wong.

Still, Canadian consumers were intrigued by the prospect that shopping at Walmart would no longer require crossing an international border and that the world's largest retailer was coming here.

"I clearly remember that era and [questioned] why



was Canada always so touched to be graced by 'Made in America' when we had world-class retailers and brands here," recalls Chapman.

But the big American brand won over Canadians with its customer-focused ethos, as well delivering "Everyday Low Prices."

Kirsten Evans, EVP, marketing at Walmart Canada says a quarter century later, the brand has stayed true to its purpose of saving Canadians money. "It's our DNA. We put the customer first because the customer is our boss. We work very hard every day to find ways to serve our customers better."

BECOMING CANADIAN

According to Wong, a key to the brand's success was that it actually cared about being Canadian. "Walmart was careful to stress its Canadian character," he says. "Most significantly Walmart recognized that Canada was different and ran it through their international division and not as an extension of the U.S."

On this point, Jim Dahany, a retail analyst and CEO of consultancy CustomerLab agrees. "Walmart has been a good student of every market it works in and has been prepared to listen – unlike Target, which was pure economic imperialism," he says of the latter retailer's ultimate demise in Canada.

Walmart knew that Canadians were a sceptical bunch and wouldn't believe its "Everyday Low Prices" were just that. To address this disbelief, the company launched with a TV spot from SMW Advertising, its agency at the time, which introduced the brand in a friendly, homespun way. Opening on "Wilf" the Walmart greeter, "Becoming Walmart" asked viewers to pardon the dust as they work hard to become Walmart – a nod to the Woolco locations it was converting at the time – and promised "a better product selection, lower prices on everything in the store and better customer service."

The strategy worked. Within two years, Walmart Canada was estimated to control 40% of the general merchandising segment, and was ranked the number one retailer among 80% of Canadians, according to a KubasPrimedia study. In 1996, the brand was ranked by *Strategy* magazine as the best store for customer service and value for money – the same year Walmart introduced its Smiley mascot. By 1999, it was named marketer of the decade by *Marketing* magazine.

Since then, it's been consistently named one of Canada's top 10 most influential brands, serving more than 1.2 million customers each day in-store and 750,000 daily online. And with a head count of more than 85,000, it's also one of Canada's largest employers.

A COMMUNICATIONS CRISIS

With customer acceptance and market dominance, the Canadian expansion was a successful one. Then, in 2004, a small store in Jonquière, a rural town in Quebec, threatened the reputation of the global brand, explains Yanik Deschenes, now-managing director, PR at Sid Lee.

Deschenes joined Walmart at the height of what became a global-facing crisis as the company's director of corporate affairs. Five months after Walmart employees in Jonquière failed in their attempt to unionize, the company closed the store, citing a lack of profitability. The move set off a firestorm of negative sentiment across the province.

The story quickly became a national one and soon it made international waves, right at a time when the company was going through a global expansion.

The communications strategy Deschenes devised while at Walmart, from 2005 to 2009, was to play both offence and defense. Defense meant engaging with media, responding to critics and being part of the discussion instead of trying not to engage, which had been the previous approach. Offense meant telling the brand's story in Quebec because, as Deschenes says, "nobody knew the story of Walmart."

To do so, the company launched a broad advertising campaign to announce the Buy Quebec program, which was created by Allard Johnson and highlighted all the ways Walmart supported the local economy.

"What people didn't realize is that Walmart was investing billions of dollars in the province of Quebec and supporting local products by putting them on their shelves," Deschenes says, believing that Quebec brands like Groupe Biscuits Leclerc owe their national exposure to Walmart's local support. "The Buy Quebec program shared the story of that investment. The moment people understood the story of Walmart, the vision of its founders and its purpose, the crisis disappeared."

The company's tussles with unions have been covered by media since that crisis, both here and abroad. While the Supreme Court of Canada ultimately ruled in 2014 that the closure of the Jonquière store violated Quebec labour code, Deschenes says the Buy Quebec program is a classic case study of how dramatically investing in marketing and PR can impact brand value.

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

Partnering with charities is a big focus for Walmart Canada, part of its objective to win the hearts of Canadians by giving back to local communities.

Since 1994, Walmart has raised and donated \$130 million for Children's Miracle Network and \$350 million for other Canadian charities, including Breakfast Club of Canada and Canadian Red Cross. It's donated 16 million pounds of food via Food Banks Canada.



Above: A holiday “Teddy” spot is the first sign of Walmart’s current strategy to bring more emotion to its marketing.

Wong also points to Walmart’s track record of asserting itself as an environmental steward by imposing eco-footprint rules on suppliers in order to meet sustainability targets.

Notably, the brand has taken a leadership role on waste reduction. To date, 87% of waste at Walmart Canada in its 400+ stores in this country is diverted from landfills and the retailer is working to send zero waste to landfill by 2025. Other 2025 goals include achieving 100% recyclable, reusable or compostable packaging for its private brand products by 2025, and reducing check-out plastic bags by a further 50%, taking approximately one billion check-out bags out of circulation over that period. And by 2028 it hopes its fleet of vehicles will be 100% powered by alternative energy. Its recent big commitment is Project Gigaton, which entails working with suppliers to remove a gigaton of omissions by 2030.

MARKETING THEN AND NOW

Walmart eventually found its place in the market, and the time came for the retailer to take a more targeted approach beyond everyday low pricing. By 2008, the brand brought J. Walter Thompson on as its agency of record, and geared its efforts toward speaking to the female head of the house. Walmart shifted to focus on a composite shopper named “Linda,” which was then broken down into three groups: price-value shoppers, price-sensitive affluents, and younger brand aspirationalists. This new push dovetailed a redesigned logo and new tag: “Save Money. Live Better.”

Its 2012 “Mom of the Year” campaign, by JWT, really

focused in on celebrating mothers. Recognizing that being a mom can be a thankless job, and that 3.5 million of Canada’s 9.2 million moms shop at Walmart each year, the brand created a campaign to give them the spotlight by asking Canadians to nominate their mothers for the title of “Mom of the Year.”

The ultimate gesture came in 2018 when Walmart turned a store in suburban Toronto into “MOMmart” in celebration of Mother’s Day. For the stunt and social video (created by Ruckus Digital), the facade of the store sported a transformed logo, and mothers were treated as champions by employees.

“Moms do so much each and every day, with no ask for recognition – but they certainly deserve it. This never-before-done transformation in one of our communities is our way of sharing a small token of our appreciation for moms everywhere,” Tammy Sadinsky, VP marketing communications, Walmart Canada said at the time. The event also kicked off the brand’s annual fundraising campaign for Children’s Miracle Network.

While the head of the household has been a focus for Walmart for the good part of a decade, these days, the brand is looking to evolve its message. To do just that it has partnered with content and advertising agency Church+State, as well as Cossette, which was named AOR in 2018. “The ambition at the heart of our new AOR partnership is to unlock the potential for such a purpose-driven brand like Walmart and help modernize it,” says Sadinsky. “There is an opportunity to drive greater relevance and resonance of our brand with Canadians, both in what we say and how we say it.”

Carlos Moreno, co-global CCO at Cossette, says that means doubling down on emotion. “Walmart has always been a leader in low prices, but now the opportunity is to take an iconic brand and build an even deeper emotional connection with consumers.”

Strategically, the agency is positioning the retailer as an ally to Canadian families, and the first output of that direction came with “Teddy,” last year’s touching holiday spot that told the story of an overlooked bear. After spending the night exploring a Walmart store, Teddy finds his way back to a restocked shelf where he’s finally chosen by a dad as a gift for a young girl.

The spot was viewed close to a million times, and YouTube Canada listed it on their top five ads in 2018. The featured teddy bear quickly sold out at stores, and there were hundreds of calls for more on social. “Teddy” was also one of the best performing spots for breakthrough and brand link for Walmart in the past decade, based on Ipsos reporting.

Moreno says that not all spots will be as unbearably cute: “It’ll be about figuring out when to be more emotional and tugging at the heartstrings and when to hit harder on the lowest prices.”

A FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

If deepening the human connection is a present and future focus of Walmart Canada, so too is delivering the services and products that Canadians are demanding.

“While our purpose hasn’t changed, our customer has,” says marketing EVP Evans. “To quote Sam Walton, ‘To succeed, you have to stay out in front of the change.’ And, we’re working with more urgency than ever in technology and innovation.”

Jennifer Stahlke, VP customer marketing, says the customer is more demanding than ever and is driving the company’s omnichannel offerings. “Price will always be their number one priority, but now time is on top of their list as well. We are focused on providing the customer price leadership in a way that’s seamless and easy for them to shop, however they choose to shop.”

The brand’s omni-channel ecosystem now includes in-store, online, delivery and, now, pick-up towers for urban centres, through PenguinPickUp. Stahlke says they’re focused on providing faster checkout, expanding its grocery pickup, bringing more third-party sellers to Walmart.ca, and offering a better online experience.

Still, in this age of Amazon and same-day delivery, Evans says the majority of Canadians prefer to shop in-

store, which means bricks-and-mortar remains a focus for the brand. In fact, its many physical locations might be an advantage in an era when e-tailers like Amazon are experimenting with bricks-and-mortar stores.

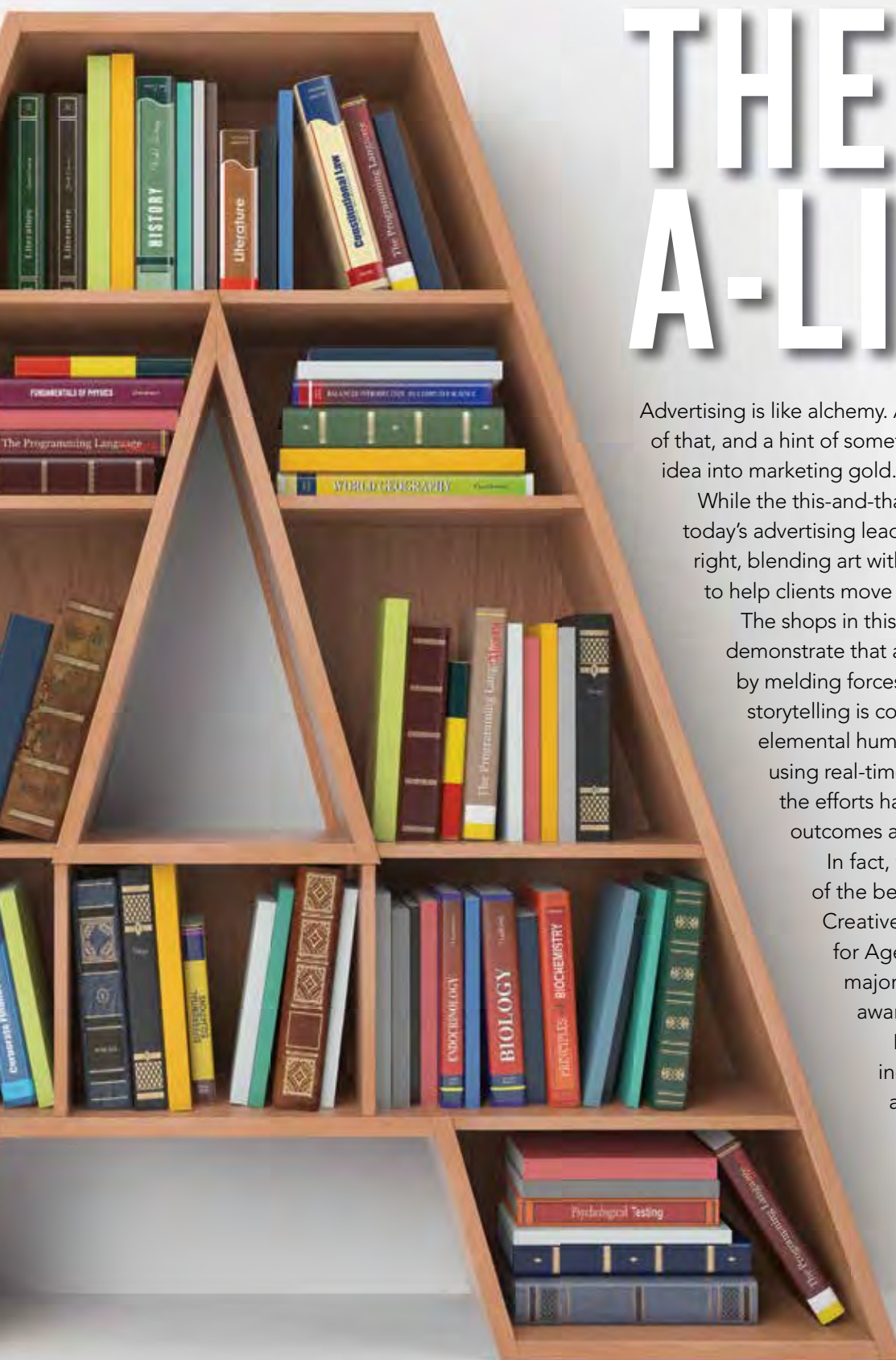
In the last year, Walmart Canada has invested \$175 million in features and improvements that enhance the overall customer experience. Those improvements include renovations at 23 stores; the seamless integration of online shopping, with features like dedicated parking spaces for grocery pickup; a new supercentre in Burnaby B.C. with a vast East Asian offering; and the launch of Newfoundland’s first supercentre, meaning Walmart’s large-store format is now available in every province.

All of this amounts to a strong footing for the brand, retail analyst Dahany says.

“I think [Walmart is] a long way from losing momentum. They’re continuing to invest in the drivers of growth that Sears didn’t. They’re staying in touch [with local markets] in a way Target didn’t. And they’re investing in the communities that they serve through bricks-and-mortar and physical contact that Amazon hasn’t yet,” he says. “[Walmart is] investing in the evolution of their model.” 

You don’t look a day over 24⁹⁷

Happy 25th Walmart Canada! From your partners at Church+State.



THE A-LIST

Advertising is like alchemy. A little of this, a dash of that, and a hint of something new can turn an idea into marketing gold.

While the this-and-that varies by brief and agency, today's advertising leaders are alchemists in their own right, blending art with algorithms, creativity with data to help clients move the needle on their business.

The shops in this year's Agency A-list demonstrate that ability to conjure results by melding forces of old and new. Timeless storytelling is combined with cutting-edge tech; elemental human behaviour is tapped into using real-time data. Whatever the combo, the efforts have an impact on both business outcomes and creative benchmarks.

In fact, the A-List represents the best of the best: they either topped the Creative Report Card, were shortlisted for Agency of the Year or picked up major hardware at top advertising award shows around the globe.

Read on to find out how the industry's top media and creative agencies are melding art and science.



Zulu Alpha Kilo

A decade of momentum has the independent shop in full stride

When Zak Mroueh walked away as partner and chief creative officer of a successful agency in 2008, he wanted to create a different experience for clients and staff. He wasn't interested in agency business as usual.

Built on a set of core values (no spec pitches, a culture of creativity, focus on quality versus chasing growth), Zulu has always gone against the grain. Now after years of bucking industry convention, Mroueh feels the Toronto-based 120-person agency is hitting its full stride.

It didn't happen overnight.

The momentum that Zulu is experiencing follows a decade of small but important decisions, which are now paying dividends for its talent and a client roster that includes Avrio Health, Bell, CAMH, Cineplex, Consonant Skincare, HomeEquity Bank, Interac, ParticipACTION, RGC, Tim Hortons, Uber and Whirlpool.

One of Zulu's newest clients is Subaru Canada. In selecting Zulu as its AOR, Subaru Canada's VP marketing & product management Ted Lalka says: "We were impressed with Zulu's work for big brands with impressive results. They had a strong point of view and belief system that struck a chord with us."

Zulu has been a values-driven creative company from the start. "We challenged the status quo, not to be different for the sake of it, but because we were steadfast in our beliefs and values," says Mroueh. "Decisions we made early on limited our growth, but it laid the foundation for the agency we are today."

Pivotal client wins, an impressive body of work, a vibrant agency culture and tangible industry changes are the spoils of these long-term investments.

Zulu injected new life into the 33-year-old Roll Up The Rim to Win contest with a mockumentary video series, called "Roll Up Legends." Treating the game as if it were a sport, "The Injury" episode chronicles a former Roll Up champ in rehab after breaking both his thumbs opening a pickle jar.

In the past year, the agency has attracted a lot of press attention. *Forbes* named Zulu one of North America's 25 Best Small Companies, the first agency ever recognized in the feature, and included Zulu in its top 100 innovators issue. And for the second year in a row, *Maclean's* named Zulu to its Canada's Best Managed Companies list compiled by Deloitte.

After eight years of not participating in spec pitches, Mroueh says better-run pitches are now happening across the industry.

"Peers told us this policy wasn't sustainable," reflects Zulu president Mike Sutton. But client response has fueled the opposite outcome. Existing Zulu clients appreciated that their agency's focus was on their business challenges versus pitching potential clients. "Many potential clients have removed spec work from their RFPs to accommodate our position. We're noticing a major shift in the RFP process industry wide," says Sutton.

The decision to "Say No to Spec" benefits Zulu's clients in other ways. "Instead of doing spec, we encourage proactive creativity on their business," adds Mroueh. "We believe in coming back with what's required plus something unexpected."

This approach led to "The Away Game" film for Tim Hortons.

It features Tim Hortons, along with NHL stars Sidney Crosby and Nathan MacKinnon, hosting Kenya's only hockey team, which had never played against another team. "Zulu came back to us with the tactical work that we'd briefed them on, but they also presented an amazing activation that we fell in love with instantly," says Tim Hortons Global CMO Axel Schwan.

The agency also helped the brand launch the Timmies Minis kid's pack, the Tims Rewards loyalty program and turned the Roll Up The Rim to Win contest on its head, treating it like a professional sport that Canadians train for all year long. The agency launched a series of online mockumentary-style videos and a digital app that allowed consumers to use a thumb treadmill on their phone to prepare for Roll Up season.

Having just celebrated 10 years, Zulu heads into its 11th with a thriving culture and unwavering commitment to creativity. "When many in the industry are shrinking creative resources and trying to morph into consulting firms, we are doubling down on creativity," says Sutton.

Mroueh adds the agency is encouraged to have a fearless mentality and inspire its clients to move beyond their comfort zone. "Delivering a breakthrough creative product and real results for our clients is our obsession. Too many agencies lose sight of this," he says. "Building fancy presentation decks and pleasing holding company shareholders isn't why clients choose an agency. Clients need creativity to solve real business problems."



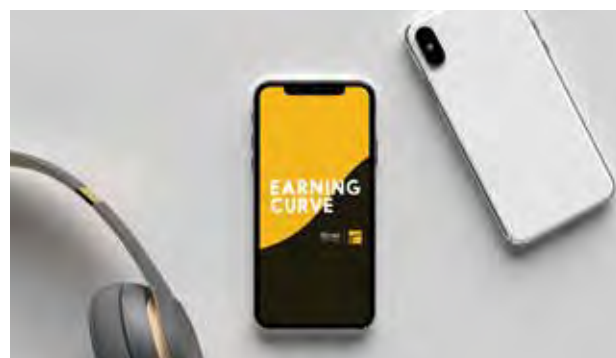
The last thing anyone wants to do during Roll Up Season is sprain a thumb. To keep players coming back for more Zulu created the Roll Up The Rim Gym to let Tim Hortons fans keep their thumbs in shape via smartphone workouts.



Zulu's campaign for the Coalition for Gun Control placed 10,000 bullets inside outdoor installations across the city. The integrated campaign drove to TriggerChange.ca, where Canadians could support legislation for a national handgun and assault weapon ban. It received CBC and CTV nation news coverage.



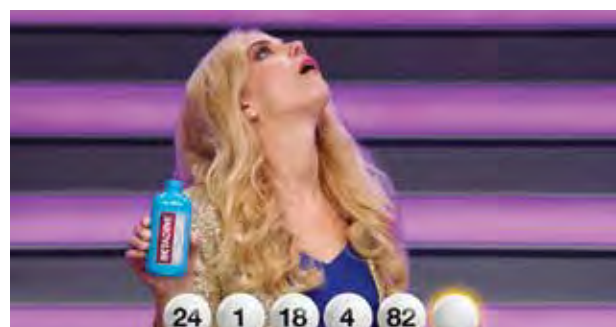
In the "Roll Up Legends" series which spoofs Canadian's obsession with the contest, "The Rivals" portrays two office workers in a head-to-head prize battle.



To target Interac's business audience, Zulu created a podcast series instead of an ad campaign. Hosted by Michele Romanow, a Canadian tech entrepreneur and venture capitalist, the "Earning Curve" series made Apple's Best of 2018 Podcast list.



Amidst the political tension of 2018, Zulu proposed the launch of a beer to 'Remember' the ideals of a rock legend. The agency developed the name, package design, coasters and posters that were hand-stained with actual Remember IPA beer. It became NYC SingleCut Beersmiths' fastest seller and best reviewed beer ever.



When the first sign of a sore throat pops up, no moment is too awkward to use Betadine Sore Throat Gargle. Zulu's campaign featured the host of a lottery broadcast gargling with Betadine before announcing the final lottery number, as the world waits with bated breath.



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For financial brand KOHO, One Twenty Three West developed a full identity that included four card designs and custom card carriers. The unconventional identity has no set colours and can be changed daily, if needed.

One Twenty Three West

Cultivating a hands-on creative culture

Scot Keith makes a shrewd observation about advertising: only in this business, he says, do you become masterful at your craft and then you're asked to become a manager.

"It's like Sidney Crosby scoring 50 goals in a season, then asked to be the coach. It doesn't make sense."

Addressing this talent imbalance is the core mission of six-year-old Vancouver-based idea and design collective One Twenty Three West, where Keith is co-founder, president/CEO. It's why the agency's motto is "low overhead, high talent" and it's why of its 32 full-time staff, One Twenty Three West has 12 working creative directors.

"We'd rather be the Navy Seals than the Army. We put the money we save into paying better talent," says Keith. "It's all for the benefit of the client who gets top talent working on their business."

As for the low overhead side of the One Twenty Three West equation, the agency famously launched from the garage of co-founder/executive creative director of design Jeff Harrison, with its other founding partners: executive creative directors Rob Sweetman and Bryan Collins. From there, they set up shop in an industrial laundromat.

However, after five very affordable – albeit cold and loud – years in the laundromat, they needed much more space. They've since moved to a low-cost building and renovated using found objects, such as junked doors complete with knockers and pre-owned furniture.

Such creative solutions are merely an extension of the agency's approach. "We get hired when a client has a big business problem or opportunity and they need a very smart, creative and experienced team to help them," says Keith.

That creative process is marked by unparalleled collaboration. Counter to typical agency practice One Twenty Three West doesn't hold any ideas back from its clients. "We show them everything," Keith says. "We're in the idea business so we're also in the failure business, I don't care if we fail 99 times to get to something brilliant and effective."

It's how they developed Role Reversal for BCAA. Designed to bring attention to the dangers of driving high, the campaign brings a surprising twist. Instead of parents counselling their kids on the ills of driving under the influence, the TV spots show millennials giving their 420-friendly parents "the talk" on driving high.

Collins says this campaign is an example of strategy-led creative, as One Twenty Three West worked hand-in-hand with the

client from the earliest stages, including strategy and research.

"Research revealed that millennials take designated driving more seriously than any other generation," says Collins. "In fact, 91% regularly make plans for a safe ride home and 88% would never drive impaired. So we decided to celebrate them as the responsible spokespeople of our campaign."

The work was so successful that it was picked up by every CAA organization across the country.

Collaboration also led to a very unconventional identity for financial brand KOHO, which included a series of four credit card designs. Collins says the generative design was inspired by the constant struggle between spending and saving, the bright colour shifts representing how the balance is always changing. The branding was a result of frequent, informal conversations with the client to bring the spirit of the company to life.

Keith says the agency tends to attract clients with an entrepreneurial spirit, ones who know that great talent is worth investing in, and "businesses that are going for it." In turn, that focus on making their clients' businesses better has resulted in a balanced, hands-on creative culture.

"We hire on talent and good character," he says, noting that in six years, only four people have left the agency. "We don't have foosball tables or pool tables; we want the work to be the thing, and we have fun with good people while we do it. That's why all of our creative directors are working and getting their hands dirty. It's what makes them happy. Creative people should create, and when they do, the client benefits."



Millennials are the first generation to see drunk driving as socially unacceptable behaviour. One Twenty Three West was tasked with getting them to feel the same about driving high. To do so, they depicted teens as the ones warning their parents about high-driving. "We knew finger-wagging wouldn't work. We needed a more positive message," says co-founder/ECD Bryan Collins.



After 90 years serving BC, White Spot needed a brand refresh to spur slowing sales, so One Twenty Three West leaned into the brand's strength: that for almost a century, they and their Legendary Burgers are practically woven into BC culture. The agency created BC's Own, a campaign that reminds British Columbians why they fell in love with White Spot in the first place.



One Twenty Three West created the MADE/NOUS brand, identity and campaign to shift attitudes toward Canadian content to one of pride. The campaign, voiced by Academy award-winner Christopher Plummer, featured actor Jacob Tremblay, the Assassin's Creed video game franchise, a nod to *Deadpool* and many more Canadian creative successes.



For Muskoka Legendary Gin from Muskoka Distillery, the agency brought the legend of the region's mythical antlered bird to the fore, creating a package design that at once felt similar to the brewery's other brands, yet is different enough to feel unique from parent company, Muskoka Brewery.



The Windfall Cider brand is all about luck and good fortune – finding your proverbial golden apple. One Twenty Three West created the brand, identity and packaging for a line of ciders including Hail Mary Rose Cider.



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UM Canada

Investing in the power of culture

Fiercely committed to the spirit of better, the growing 205-person media agency UM Canada is a strategically driven team powered by a unique and deep-rooted culture, which president Shelley Smit sees as the secret sauce behind their success.

UM's quest to raise the bar for the industry – and themselves – is an approach reflected in the Toronto agency's mantra to use "Better Science and Better Art to drive Better Business Outcomes." And it's a belief that UM has doubled down on in the past year.

The nine-year-old agency amped up its industry-leading data and tech capabilities with the network's acquisition of global data powerhouse Axciom. It also continues to expand its own Decision Science team of analytics experts and the ranks of their in-house business strategy group through new hires.

The investment spurred exceptional growth for the agency. In the past year, UM Canada has welcomed 11 new clients, growing over 15%. It was named in *Ad Age's* Best Places to Work as the #1 media agency, ranked as the #1 most competitive agency in Canada by RECMA, and received 42 medals so far this awards season. In addition, UM was ranked #1 in the Leader quadrant by technology advisory Forrester in their first-ever Global Media Agencies study.

"This report was the first to recognize our vision of being a media consultancy at scale," says Smit. "Forrester gave us top ranking on our strategic vision, strength in data analytics, culture of innovation and ability to create integrated solutions for our clients."

Smit says that when the agency engages with a client on a brief, the team digs deep to uncover insights and learn how their proprietary data capabilities can accelerate brand goals. "Optimizing against vanity metrics will not help clients move their

UM is recognized as the leading media agency in terms of best place to work (*Ad Age*), the #1 most competitive agency in Canada (RECMA) and also ranked #1 in the leader quadrant for strength in data analytics, technology and strategic vision (Forrester).

business forward. The key is to align strategy and media to the business metrics that will improve performance," she says.

The agency's work demonstrates how they're delivering on their promise to transform media into a top-line growth driver for brands.

For instance, UM launched a global-first, video flyer for Sobeys on Facebook, providing personalized promotional options as consumers shift away from traditional flyers. UM's Audience Management Platform (AMP) was used to combine first-party client and syndicated data to identify Sobeys' highest value audiences. "Our precision marketing approach allowed Sobeys to reach specific consumers directly on their mobile devices, deliver customized flyer video content and fully optimize campaigns, driving tremendous ROI," Smit says.

Leading up to the legalization of cannabis in Canada, UM worked with Oh Henry! to harness this cultural phenomenon and grow the brand. Orchestrating an integrated strategy that included influencer partnerships, targeted online and social ads, outdoor, and a pop-up "dispensary," UM helped launch a limited-edition hunger bar: The Oh Henry! 4:25. Loaded with extra peanuts for protein, it was designed to be eaten five minutes after 4:20, stoner slang for when it's time to light up. Because "when people get high, they get hungry." The campaign was a hit and sparked a media frenzy earning over 69 million impressions.

"We needed to make Oh Henry! relevant to a younger audience," Smit says. "We worked very closely with our client and partners to drive relevance and impact. A million bars sold out right away and the broader brand saw an 8% increase in share, while competitors declined."

Smit says this type of innovative work is fueled by UM's unique culture, underpinned by six core tenets: courage, curiosity, candour, commitment, caring and community. "We're focused on the link between employee happiness and productivity" says Smit, noting the agency has maintained an industry-best employee turnover rate of less than 10%.

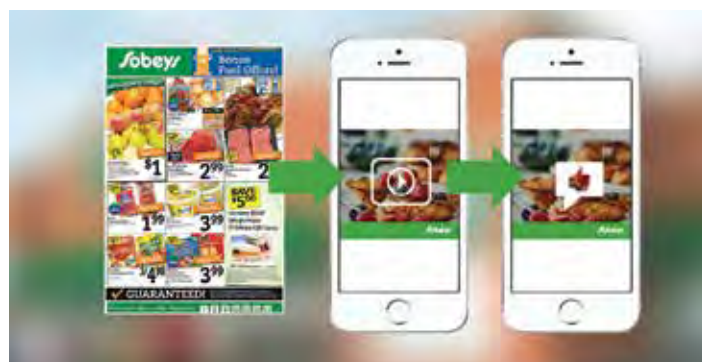
While the company's mission is to drive business results for its clients, Smit says their culture is the reason they excel at what they do. "Our culture of innovation is based on accessibility, transparency and trust," she says. "Every role is as valuable as the next. When people know they're supported in their career and their input is valued, they're inspired to bring their best game, which in turn drives our clients' business. We call it Return on Culture and it's undeniably our most important performance measure."



Using UM's proprietary Addressable Content Engine (ACE), Boston Pizza was able to target high-value prospects with data-triggered content and deliver one-to-one messaging at scale. By connecting exactly when prospects were most receptive to purchase, ACE boosted online orders from non-customers by a whopping 44% and significantly reduced cost per acquisition.



The Oh Henry! 4:25 bar is meant to be consumed 5 minutes after "4:20" (stoner slang for getting high). UM built a bold integrated campaign to get the word out featuring Canadian YouTube food legends Epic Meal Time (who showcased a 100-pound Oh Henry! 4:25 bar), plus social, digital, PR and experiential tactics. The campaign drove an outstanding 8% share gain for the broad Oh Henry! brand.



As grocery behaviour shifts and shoppers move away from traditional flyers, UM created a global industry first: the delivery of a video grocery flyer on Facebook for Sobeys. This future-forward media innovation provided dynamic, personalized offers to shoppers on their mobile devices, resulting in increased engagement and traffic, giving Sobeys a powerful advantage in the market.



CAMH's challenge was to change the stigma around mental health. To do so, the agency turned every media touchpoint into a persuadable moment through a provocative content distribution strategy, inspiring people to become advocates. The campaign broke through to Canadians, generating a dramatic 41% lift in online donations.



"We help brands grow by using Better Science and Better Art to drive Better Outcomes," says president Shelley Smit of its mantra, which is displayed in UM's lobby. "Our obsession with turning media into a topline growth driver makes us our clients' secret weapon."



UM's Decision Science team used precision targeting to help Sony Pictures Canada's *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle* win an epic box-office showdown during the hyper-competitive holidays. The film maintained a top position at the box office for over a month, going on to become Sony's highest grossing film of all time domestically.



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The Colony Project's 20 all-female staff members work across all disciplines and clients, constantly learning from each other to drive first-to-market strategies.

The Colony Project

What the next evolution of PR looks like

Let's face it: PR has changed, and there is no going back. "PR agencies" must now also be digital agencies, experiential partners, consumer strategy shops and influencer experts to be relevant to client needs.

The Colony Project was built on this premise. It is not a PR agency, but is what PR has evolved into – a 360-degree communications firm. And the growth of this three-year old organization proves it knows how to make brand building work in the expanding earned-media marketplace.

The range of new clients alone speaks volumes of what this 20-woman team is capable of. Over the last year, The Colony Project began working with Pizza Pizza, Toronto's Union Station, Escalade Wine and Spirits, online real estate disruptors Homewise and Justo, L'Oreal's Dermablend brand and the Ontario Heritage Trust. (The agency saw 60% growth in 2018 after making a name for itself with clients such as Hyundai and Bayer Healthcare.)

"We don't seek out clients in specific sectors just to round out some preconceived notion of what a 'successful' agency looks like," says Colony Project managing director Amanda Shuchat. "We like variety, and variety serves our clients better."

Diverse clients, she says, better inform her staff of what Canadians like and react to. While there are digital, influencer

and XM experts on staff, they are not siloed away from the rest of the team; everyone learns everything to keep things flexible. And since everyone at the firm pitches in across clients, they're constantly learning how to engage audiences, taking inspiration from one sector to create first-to-market ideas elsewhere.

"For example, what Hyundai needs from me is not yet another auto expert," Shuchat says. "They need someone who's an expert in communication, in audience and earned media, which is a rapidly changing target."

Primarily, a modern PR agency must be a fully integrated partner in brand building, as The Colony Project has become with clients such as the Match International Women's Fund and the cannabis company Aphria.

These organizations have very different goals – Match is a non-profit NGO looking to raise

awareness of global women's inequality, while Aphria is building share in a new industry crowded with well-funded competitors. But The Colony Project's expertise in reaching Canadians is helping both.

For Aphria, the agency is a key partner building a community around RIFF, one of Aphria's recreational-use brands. The Colony Project is using its growing expertise in the cannabis space and roots in the creative industry to co-host immersive events in major cities to reach the target with a discerning eye.

Match, meanwhile, wanted to highlight the problem of child marriage. So, working off a news story about a Sudanese girl bride who had been auctioned off for cattle online, The Colony Project developed an online tool that showed how many cows a woman was worth as tradeable property. It personalized the story for Canadians and drove an increase in donations.

As for The Colony Project's future, this female-led agency wants to continue growing and diversifying its roster of clients and its portfolio of convention-busting work.

"We want to do work that's in new spaces, and perhaps in unproven ones," Shuchat says. "We want the brave ones who are willing to take risks, go where there are no business results yet, and truly try first-to-market ideas."



Ahead of October 17th, Colony helped launch a transformative community and cannabis brand. To prove the power of creativity and community, Colony and RIFF hosted top tier media and social influencers at SESSIONS and SESSIONS XL events, hitting 5 markets across Canada in the two weeks leading up to the legalization of cannabis.



To solidify the connection between Nando's as a brand with roots in Southern Africa, Colony sent two of Nando's biggest fans, etalk's Liz Trinneer and rapper Kardinal Offishall, on an adventure their taste buds wouldn't forget. Nando's Canada hosted the two personalities overseas in Southern Africa to experience first-hand the rich brand history and the story of Nando's PERI-PERi.



THE COLONY PROJECT
WOMEN'S FUND

RECEIPT

AGE	70 COWS
SEXUAL STATUS	30 COWS
MENSTRUATION	30 COWS
FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING	0 COWS
SOCIO-ECONOMIC UPBRINGING	20 COWS
LAND OWNERSHIP	0 COWS

TOTAL BRIDE PRICE **150 COWS**
DATE: MARCH 4, 2019

Do you know how many cows you're worth? To promote fundraising for Match International Women's Fund, The Colony Project built an online tool that calculated women's "worth" as prospective wives to highlight how young girls can be traded as brides.



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In Canada, men who have sex with men are banned from donating blood. Yet, every year, Health Canada is in desperate need of donations. Sid Lee showed Canadians that “Gay is Not a Blood Type” through an animated musical number starring campaign spokesperson, Gary the Gay Blood Cell, and invited surrogate donors to take up the cause and push for change.

Sid Lee

Shaping culture one flag at a time

When Toronto Raptors fans, and Torontonians in general, first saw the anthemic and uncharacteristically patriotic “We The North” campaign, the response was immediate and electric. The work, designed to promote the Toronto NBA franchise, served as a flashpoint, uniting not just fans but the entire city around the cause of being different and damn proud of it.

At the time, Sid Lee Toronto wanted to create something for the Raps that would resonate with fans. Instead, they inserted the team – and themselves – deeply within the cultural fabric of Canada.

The campaign is reflective of the agency’s desire to shape culture and it was a turning point for the 100-person Sid Lee Toronto team from a new business perspective both across the country and south of the border. It also helped change the perception of the nine-year-old agency from being a small collective of artists and an offshoot of 25-year-old Sid Lee Montreal to a being viewed as in-demand creative problem solvers.

“After that campaign, every client came and said ‘we want our We The North’,” says co-managing partner Tom Koukodimos. “It’s great that they had that ambition but every business has its unique business problem. It was a pivotal moment to understand the power in our process.”

Of course, creating excitement around sport is one thing; creating that kind of awareness around more sensitive topics, such as inequality, is something else. But that’s the kind of work that Sid Lee has been behind in the years since “We The North.”

That ethos can be seen in “Bulletproof Flag,” a flag handmade of Kevlar – the material used in bulletproof vests – for Black Lives Matter Canada, which is the unification of 20 different BLM chapters. The idea was to create a symbol that would represent this newly formed group in a big, bold way in order to spark conversation, empower the community and make a strong statement in marches and demonstrations across the country. It was named *strategy’s* Design Campaign of the Year.

“Our biggest problem (and opportunity) was to create something that wasn’t fleeting or just another headline. It had to be respectful of the cause, contribute to it in a meaningful way and be something that would endure far beyond the trending topic of the day,” says Jared Stein, EVP Growth & Innovation, Partner. “Our goal was to create something tangible and impactful. Protest, after all, is a tool to effect change at a grand scale.”

For Egale Canada, the country’s leading advocate for LGBT+ issues, Sid Lee brought a humorous tone to a serious issue. To address the fact that men who have sex with men are banned from donating blood, despite a desperate need of donations, the agency was tasked with raising awareness and beginning a dialogue that could end the restrictions once and for all.

The result was an animated musical starring campaign spokesperson, Gary the Gay Blood Cell, which illustrated to Canadians that gay is not a blood type. The campaign includes the ability for supporters to pledge to be a blood surrogate and donate blood on behalf of those who can’t.

Jeffrey Da Silva, Sid Lee executive creative director and partner, says the agency recently developed a framework to create work that is inspiring, resonant and adds real value to clients’ business. It’s called the Creative Credo and asks four questions: is the work in context, does it shape culture, is there an art factor, and does it break rules?

This credo sparked the agency to create an alarm clock song to help people greet the day for Starbucks as part of its “MorningYes” campaign. “We worked with a sound designer and scientist to figure out the most beautiful sounds to wake up to,” says Da Silva. “The alarm was born of the insight that Starbucks is already involved in people’s mornings, but how else can we make mornings better.”

As Eve Rémillard-Larose, co-managing partner adds, “It’s important to go beyond what the brands say, it’s how the brand behaves as well, because if it connects with people, we know that business results will follow.”



To symbolize the unification of Black Lives Matter groups across Canada, the agency created a flag made entirely of Kevlar. In the fall of 2018, the flag was exhibited as part of a 10-city, cross-country tour and was a central element to gallery events showcasing new works by local black artists.



The first moments in the morning can determine our state of mind for the rest of the day. But most alarm clocks jolt us awake with a stressful, jarring sound. Collaborating with a team of neuroscientists, musicians and health experts, Starbucks' "MorningYes" is an upbeat alarm scientifically engineered to wake you up feeling better.

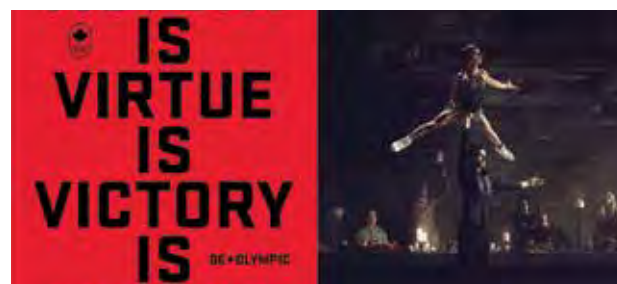


Sid Lee expanded on its "Get What's Yours" platform for H&R Block by positioning the brand as a tax-return champion and experienced hero fighting the tax fight on behalf of Canadians for over half a century. As a result, H&R Block was able to grow new clients for the retail portion of its business by 4.5% for the first time in five years.

In 2018, Maple Leaf Foods launched a totally renovated product line, changing the way they make all their food, removing everything artificial from all of their products. Sid Lee relaunched the well-known brand to Canadians with the "We're for Real" platform, focusing on real ingredients, real moments and real families.



When Sid Lee Toronto moved into its new office in the old MOCA building at Queen and Ossington, the agency took on a new role: creative directors of the Ossington strip. Working with Hullmark, the landowner of many of the buildings on the street, the agency was asked to attract more daytime foot traffic to round out the bustling nightlife. Sid Lee developed the Emotophone, a two-way metal speaker that encourages strangers to communicate from afar.



The Canadian Olympic Committee's "Be Olympic" campaign, featuring athletes' stories of perseverance, demonstrates that Olympic values are Canadian values and glorifies Olympians as the champions of virtue. The campaign resulted in the highest number of olympic.ca page views ever recorded during the games, with 17 million views, surpassing its engagement goal by 200%.



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The Daruma is a Japanese tradition symbolizing perseverance and good luck for the mission ahead. This artifact, first introduced to BBR by its Toyota client, has come to represent the agency's mission-driven mentality. BBR believes that to create work that truly changes the course of things for its clients, they must approach their mandates as missions. Because missions have a beginning and an end, they are solution-oriented and their success can be measured.

the years spent building best-in-breed disciplines within the agency since 2004, when Fauré took the helm as senior partner/CEO, as well as the addition of the Toronto office in 2016.

This was followed in 2017 by the launch and subsequent growth of Humanise, a collective of seven independent companies each specializing in a different area of marketing or business consulting.

In addition, its Brand Language division offers trans-creation services that adapt global brands into local markets through careful examination of linguistics and culture.

In terms of optimization and media strategy, the agency's data consultancy service Glassroom enables clients to move beyond the old school "spray and pray" into a pure ROI-driven, highly optimized approach to marketing. Yoon is quick to note that BBR and Glassroom are committed to total transparency. "We are intensely co-creative with clients, and show them all the data."

This ethos of transparency and a mission-based approach runs across all the companies at Humanise, such as Montreal-based Alice & Smith, whose gaming studio creates some of the world's most popular alternate reality games (ARG), and works with global clients such as Sotheby's International Realty to "gamify" everything from marketing to recruitment and employee engagement.

One of the most unique offerings within the Humanise collective is L'Institut Idée, a master-planning think tank in Toronto that helps clients transform how they think about their business and find their purpose.

Recent work for Sheraton worldwide, part of an assignment that included nine other Marriott brands, shows what can come from this process. One in 10 premium hotel rooms around the world belong to Sheraton, but over time the venerable brand had lost a sense of what it stood for. Using its proprietary Structural Mapping Process, BBR and L'Institut Idée mapped the brand's true DNA and then worked closely with Sheraton's global brand team to develop a vital new positioning, focusing on Sheraton being "the world's public square".

"Sheraton has big public spaces where they can bring people from all walks of life together," says Yoon. "The new brand idea is to be inclusive, not exclusive. We've changed the course of things for this huge global brand."

Fauré says this work demonstrates that the agency has reached a new level that he believes is rare for its size. "We're more agile and passionate, we can operate on a global scale, and we're able to attract the best talent in the industry. We're incredibly proud of that."

Bleublancrouge

Ready for a global spotlight

After 35 years as one of Montreal's top agencies, Bleublancrouge (BBR) has attracted the attention of national and global clients at an unprecedented pace. Within the last 12 months, the agency, with its sister companies from the Humanise collective, won the national AOR account for Desjardins, one of Canada's largest financial services brands (which recently acquired State Farm Insurance), and now works with brand teams across the world including eBay Canada, Sotheby's and numerous hospitality brands at Marriott International.

"Decades of experience and innovation, done quietly and with little fanfare, has led to this moment where the agency has come into its own," says Wahn Yoon, president of the agency's Toronto office.

At its core, BBR helps clients with what it calls transformational advertising, which CEO Sébastien Fauré describes as work that makes a lasting difference versus work that just wins a contest. "We believe that work should be based on mission, not just deliverables. Outcomes, not just outputs," he says.

In the past year and in Canada alone, BBR has produced standout work for SICO, which tapped into cultural icons beloved by Quebecers, it rebranded Bio-K, and helped achieve the turnaround of COLD-FX by positioning the brand as an essential companion to a successful "You Season".

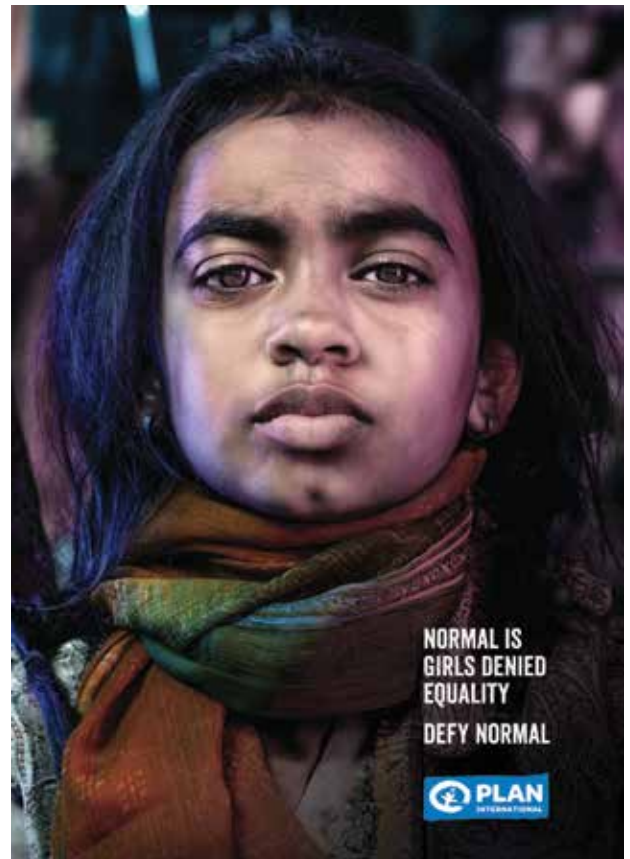
Years of research and development led to BBR's suite of specialized services designed to deliver results beyond the typical agency offering. They credit the sudden and welcome attention to



To reaffirm the relationship SICO has with Quebecers, BBR created over 150 distinct, colourful nods to Quebec culture, then presented the homages in every nook and cranny of the province. Using both digital and traditional placement, each colourful reference was located in a strategic place chosen for its local relevance.



An established leader in the premium probiotic market, Bio-K needed to refresh its brand to fend off growing competition. To break through the common science-based messaging of the category, BBR shifted the focus to the people behind the brand with "Culture Crafters," a brand purpose driven by empathy and backed by science.



Plan is one of the largest and most respected NGOs in the country, but had not achieved significant brand awareness or differentiation in the category, against famous competitors such as World Vision or the Red Cross. BBR and L'Institut not only repositioned its masterbrand, but developed a groundbreaking "Defy Normal" campaign bringing the rights of children and the equality of girls to the forefront of public conversation.



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As you might expect from its name, Anomaly was built not simply to make ads, but to solve client problems. Today they have offices in Toronto, New York, L.A, London, Berlin, Amsterdam and Shanghai.

Not that Anomaly has turned its back on traditional marketing altogether. In fact, it's still getting recognition for campaigns that delivered big results.

The AToMiC Awards recently honoured The Hershey Company's Oh Henry! 4:25, a more filling limited edition bar released last summer to target cannabis-friendly Canadian millennials. It promised to satisfy the intense hunger that hits five minutes after 4:20.

But that weedy positioning wasn't part of the initial brief.

Initially, Hershey wanted to strengthen its position among "hunger fighting" competitors, such as Snickers. But Anomaly's strategy team found a natural fit among young Canadians who were eager for recreational marijuana's impending legalization. The result was the opening of a pop-up sampling "dispensary" in Toronto's Kensington Market (near several real dispensaries), a presence at pro-pot rallies and some very overt cannabis culture references on the packaging ("Our dankest ingredients yet")... all backed by a consumer marketing campaign.

Borland calls 4:25's campaign a "big win," especially given the category. "Hershey is a 125-year-old company" she says. "They took some big risks, leaping to the forefront of a cultural conversation and developing a product innovation that was big and bold. It's delivering a massive return."

One million bars made their way into consumers' hands, and the work garnered more than 69 million earned media impressions. "The success of 4:25 has given us the confidence to sell – and Hershey the confidence to buy – more progressive and disruptive ideas, like the Reese's Pieces Peanut Extraterrestrial Sampling Program," Borland says.

As Anomaly continues to invest in its award-winning strategy team (it consistently ranked among the top-five CASSIE-winning agencies in Canada and just hired a new CSO for the first time), its relationship with long-time clients deepens as a result. It's currently helping AB InBev – the biggest brewer in the world – think through its role in evolving beer culture. And recreational product manufacturer BRP has brought Anomaly on as its global AOR to shape the brand's product portfolio in a changing market.

"We hire multi-disciplinary talent with very diverse experience and backgrounds, a cross-section of perspectives that drives thought leadership and makes our work better," Borland says, adding that many are drawn to Anomaly's focus on "real" culture, vs just the typical drink carts and ping-pong tables. Whether through its internal professional development platform called DNA or its work building schools with Pencils of Promise, Borland says Anomaly pushes for a culture of excellence through values-based initiatives.

The result is that just about every one of its clients, old and new, is asking Anomaly to do more than create campaigns. It looks like being atypical has paid off.

Anomaly

Living up to its name with innovation and insight

Seven years after launching in Canada, it's clear that Anomaly has earned its name. It is atypical. And it's changing the very definition of what an agency can be.

After building its reputation as an innovation powerhouse with Budweiser's ever-growing "Red Light" enterprise (which grew from a hockey platform to a global sports platform with a recent implementation at the World Cup in Russia), Anomaly has doubled down on strategic thinking to build a business that genuinely partners with its clients.

Sure, many agencies claim to be partners, but Anomaly puts its money where its mouth is. Beyond innovative solutions for brands, its business model pushes towards intellectual property ownership. This approach led to partnerships such as Dosist, a health and wellness brand that Anomaly built from the ground up and now serves as a literal partner in a joint venture.

In addition to crafting the name and positioning, Anomaly owns four technology patents in Dosist's signature pen devices, which deliver measured doses of THC and CBD to offer calm, sleep or bliss (depending on the SKU).

Part of that partnership does include marketing; the agency's "Not Available in Canada" campaign is seeding the market ahead of the product's Canadian debut. But it also extends to helping write speeches for executives who meet with regulators. "We're helping them think through their distribution strategy and their relationship with the government, as legislation around cannabis oil continues to evolve," says Anomaly president Candace Borland.



Anomaly is working with Dosist to bring its measured-dose cannabis products to Canada. The agency holds four patents on the product's signature disposable pens.



Anomaly is working with BRP to globally launch its newest on-road product: the Can-Am Ryker. Launched in late 2018, the "Ride Like No Other" campaign is designed to bring new riders into the category and make 3-wheel riding mainstream.



Anomaly's "Red Light" for Budweiser began as an innovative way to connect with Canadian hockey fans, a competitive space for beer. But "Red Light" has been so successful, AB InBev has expanded it to other sports and countries, including the 2018 World Cup in Russia.



The ATOMIC Awards recently honoured The Hershey Company's Oh Henry! 4:25, a more filling limited edition bar released last summer to target cannabis-friendly Canadian millennials. It promised to satisfy the intense hunger that hits five minutes after 4:20.



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Media
IN CANADA



Through Snapchat AR, users could drop a digital model of a Ford EcoSport in their environments and take a virtual interior/exterior tour.

of the Year for the second year running. Mindshare Canada received another 14 prizes from recent awards shows with a focus on creativity, efficiency and effectiveness of media.

The agency is breaking down silos within its organization and educating staff on programmatic advertising and digital platforms – particularly Amazon, where many clients are directing their business. “We have digital buyers whom we’ve trained to also be programmatic buyers. We keep expanding our talent’s skill sets to serve our clients better,” says chief trading officer Lina Alles.

Mindshare has brought new faces into senior roles, including Sarah Thompson as chief strategy officer and Cassandra Woloschuk as social director – both coming from Cossette – and Ira Kates as search and performance director.

“Media is not meant to be passive,” Thompson says. “It’s supposed to earn people’s attention and give them a payoff and something they value.”

Case in point, innovation was at the root of a campaign for Tresemmé Compressed Micro Mist looking to show hairspray does not have to impede hair flexibility. Alongside TV, social and digital, Mindshare set up digital billboards at Montreal Metro stations featuring a model whose hair would move – yet keep its form – in sync with real-time wind measurements as trains whizzed by.

“That’s what we’re looking for to break through,” says Thompson. “We’re striving for great advertising and placement and messages people notice. We push our clients to try ideas that deliver this to their audience because it makes their media investment work harder.”



The Huddle is Mindshare’s annual festival of ideas, collaboration, and entrepreneurship. The Huddle 2019 was held on International Women’s Day with the theme #BalanceForBetter. Topics explored included motherhood, generations, gaming, the workplace and overall culture and media-shaping perceptions of women.



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Mindshare

Eternal upstart maximizes its talent

While its global entity enters its 23rd year, GroupM’s Mindshare continues to position itself as an upstart. As such, it recognizes that in an evolving landscape good ideas can come from any one of its nearly 300 staff.

“We see the shifts in media investment and work with platforms to help guide it to an effective place for advertisers,” says Devon MacDonald, Mindshare Canada CEO since last summer. “We prepare our talent for that by making sure they are curious and well-trained, and by investing in their development and to support their curiosity.”

Mindshare recently launched its Side Hustle initiative, which allows staff to pitch an internal panel on how to transform the agency and deliver better client service. If an idea is approved, the employee is given the resources to activate the program.

The passion for understanding consumers and clients fuels a prolific insight output, according to chief client operations officer Sheri Cooper. “We spend a great deal of time thinking about our client’s business, the shift of culture and the competitive landscape. That’s our heritage and we believe our investment in marketing sciences and advanced analytics brings that to life and delivers business opportunities to clients,” she says.

An idea from the trading team led to a winning campaign for Ford, borne of the insight that young people aren’t visiting showrooms, so bring the showrooms to them. Through Snapchat AR, users could drop a digital model of a Ford EcoSport in their environments and take a virtual interior/exterior tour.

The “AR In-Car” campaign garnered one million unique users within a day and 3.1 million impressions overall. It took gold for VR/AR at the MMA’s Smarties Awards, where Mindshare World was named Agency



A giant Lego mural was set up at Toronto's Union Station around Christmas that passersby could help build. The objective was to get Lego bricks into the hands of adults who never played with them as children to demonstrate the creativity and fine-motor-skill benefits.

agency Zulu Alpha Kilo, which won nine awards, including three gold at the MIAs, two gold at the CMAs and another at the Strategy Awards.

The insight indicated the motorcycle brand had lost relevance with young consumers. The strategy was to reconnect with this group through skippable YouTube pre-roll ads that paired younger riders with loyal Harley owners on a nationwide road trip. The team went against the prevailing wisdom that "short-form wins" and ran three stories at 14 minutes each.

"We believed people would want to see it," Galanis says. "We took a bit of a risk and far exceeded the benchmarks." The videos' completion rates were better than the average for 30-second ads by a factor of three and garnered 8.7 million views.

Emboldened, the agency successfully pitched Bell Media on the videos as broadcast content. The material was edited into a one-hour documentary and aired on Discovery Canada, which even scheduled pre-existing dramatic miniseries *Harley and the Davidsons*, about the manufacturer's origins, as a six-hour lead-in.

"We started with an unconventional approach to paid media and ended up earning much more exposure through the partnership opportunity with Bell Media," Galanis notes.

For client Lego, the challenge was to win over parents who didn't play with the toy as kids. Lego's insight was that it needed to get the plastic bricks in the parents' hands to build connection and demonstrate their creative and fine-motor-skill benefits. Initiative's solution was to set up an integrated campaign that included a giant Lego mural at Union Station around Christmas that passersby could help build.

"We wanted to do something local that would drive impact," Galanis explains. "It was a creative idea but fundamentally delivered on the bricks-in-hand experience. Though the experience itself was local, we were able to capture great content and amplify it through social to get more scale and reach."

Initiative's understanding of client needs is deepened by client-side experience in its leadership team. Galanis has client experience at Canadian Tire and Rogers, while three VPs have worked at Big Five banks. And then there is Nish Shah, VP strategy, whom, says Galanis, "is the one who helps set the vision and really owns the overall product with the leadership team at the end of the day."

While Initiative feels it has achieved its comeback, it's not complacent. "More than ever we're thinking about ways to transform the model and not fall into old industry conventions," Galanis says. "I'm excited to continue to build an agency that challenges the status quo – one that clients are excited to work with and where our employees are motivated to do the best work of their careers."

Initiative

Growing brands through culture

Initiative anticipates a trailblazing 2019 following a year of significant growth, according to Initiative Canada president Helen Galanis. She credits the transformation largely to the vision and stewardship of global CEO Mat Baxter and several additions to her Canadian leadership team.

"There's new energy in the organization and the results have been amazing," says Galanis, who came on board the 27-year-old shop three years ago, after IPG folded m2 into Initiative, bringing scale and clients. Now the Toronto agency, which counts 159 staff, is focused on growth.

It's also prioritizing strategies to combat ad avoidance, tackling a big brand challenge.

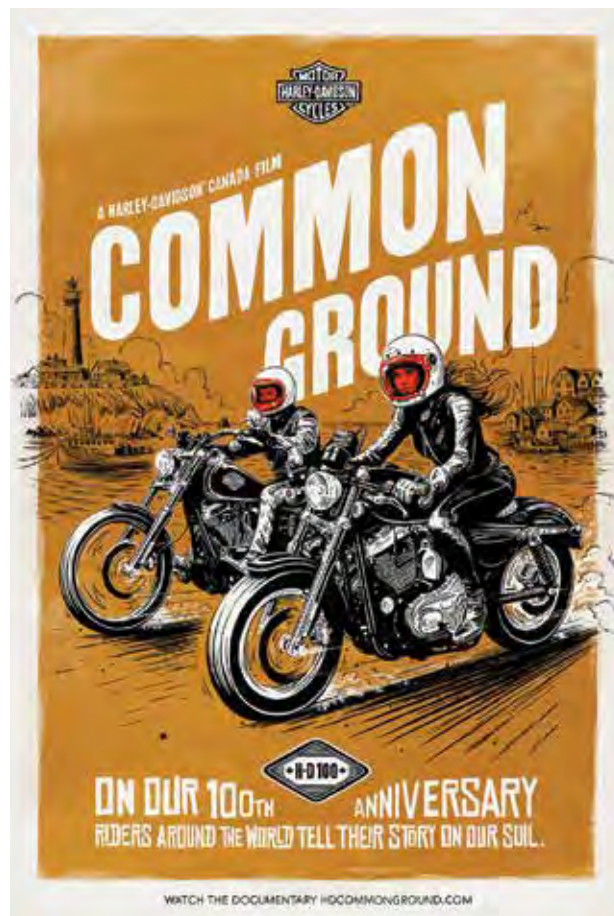
"Our antidote is to help brands diffuse their message through culture by looking at all consumer connection points – not just paid media channels," Galanis explains. "We help brands grow by driving cultural relevance. We have a tremendous data underpinning, but our differentiator is in uncovering insights and finding the right balance between reach and relevance."

Its data research has even tapped neuroscience, as in the report "What Brain Research Can Teach Us About Building Relevance," an effort with Brainsights that maps viewers' responsiveness to varying ad lengths and sequencing strategies. It has since applied these new best practices to redefine how the agency approaches video planning.

But sometimes intuition trumps science, as in Initiative's "Common Ground" campaign for Harley-Davidson with creative



Initiative Canada worked with CBC to promote drama series *Caught*. In the OOH activation, actor Allan Hawco appears to jump from one billboard across Dundas Street West to another, capturing the program's fast pace.



The "Common Ground" campaign for Harley-Davidson, featuring creative from Zulu Alpha Kilo, began as three paid 14-minute pre-roll videos that were edited into a full-length documentary that aired as content on Discovery Canada.



Initiative Canada won the best in Brand Integration at the Atomic Awards for creating a permanent Wendy's "walk-thru" restaurant in the *Big Brother Canada* household, and making it part of the plot by awarding Wendy's food for winning challenges.



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For client Destination Canada, Initiative Canada collaborated with a consortium of publishers, creating more than 100 pieces of content embedding Canada into the sub-cultures that mattered to its audience: music, style, culinary, adventure and the arts. The 100% content-led approach delivered "dreaming" and "considering" content at the right moment across publisher platforms, social, programmatic and owned channels.



Critical Mass

Focused on the customer

Critical Mass' growth over 23 years has gone hand in hand with the boom in digital marketing. But it's more than the agency's focus on digital experience design that drove the Calgary startup's expansion to nearly 1,000 employees across a dozen locations worldwide. Its informed understanding of customers has also played a key role in its success.

"We're more customer-centric than user-centric," says Critical Mass CEO Dianne Wilkins. "The delineation is knowing those customers much better. Our proprietary group does a tremendous amount of research and all kinds of ethnography. We do a lot of qualitative and quantitative analysis to get the insights that drive our outputs."

The results speak for themselves. In 2018 the shop recorded more than 13% year-over-year revenue growth, 11% global headcount growth, 11 new business wins and 15 awards, including kudos for seven projects featuring collaboration among all its offices, which span Canada, the U.S., Costa Rica, Brazil, the U.K. and China.

Ten-year client Nissan approached the agency looking for the best way to showcase the safety features of Nissan Intelligent Mobility technologies. Critical Mass' solution was the Nissan VR Tech Drive, which allows dealership visitors to navigate various road dangers from behind the wheel of an Altima via a 360° VR experience.

The offering generated 100 million video impressions and followed the "See the Unseen" campaign, in which AR allowed customers to see Nissan cars transform and appear in Star Wars environments, tied into the theatrical release of *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*. "See the Unseen" was a winner at the AdRodeo Anvils and Creativity International Awards.

"Our long-existing relationship and deep understanding of Nissan allows us to come up with these successes," Wilkins

Critical Mass created a social test drive – an interactive video experience simulating the feeling of driving the BMW 8 Series with a soundtrack composed from actual vehicle sounds. Instagram and Instagram story hacks let users exert control over the sound and lighting effects around the car as they tap through.

says. "They've tasked us with leading-edge digital and customer-centric experiences. We get permission to push the envelope and experiment with new technologies, merging the digital work we tend to do with physical environments like auto shows and dealerships. It's a lot of fun, and inspiring for our team."

Critical Mass also recently wrapped a five-year collaboration with Travel Alberta, aiming to attract young travelers to its scenic home province. It considers the "Ready" campaign – asking customers "are you ready to do this?" – its highest studio achievement. Its burgeoning in-house studio Wander collaborated with the client to storyboard, shoot and edit a four-part video series highlighting Alberta's most appealing experiences, targeted to nine international markets.

"We were able to execute some epic, gorgeous shoots working with the nature and beauty of Alberta," says the Alberta-born, New York-based Wilkins. "And as we meet clients in New York or London we're able to show some of our best work and showcase where we're from at the same time." The campaign brought home platinum from the Creativity International Awards.

Critical Mass looks to work with purpose, and so was an ideal collaborator for the Clara Lionel Foundation (CLF), a non-profit launched by pop star Rihanna to improve healthcare and education in impoverished global communities. Despite CLF's accomplishments, it remained largely unknown. Critical Mass helped with a wholesale rebrand, creating a new child-inspired logo and design language that connects digital channels, merchandise and special events. The campaign was a winner at the Creativity International Awards, the WebAwards and W3 Awards.

While global nods help inspire boundary-pushing, instead of promoting internal "rock star" talent, Critical Mass has a team-based culture and looks to further solidify its global organization. It is rolling out a Worldwide Leadership group of 50-plus senior managers across geographies, accounts and disciplines who will assemble for a week of collaboration in Calgary in May. It's all part of what Wilkins describes as "one CM."

"The global team will help ensure we stay connected and are sharing the amazing work we're doing in each place – the new process we've come up with here or the new service offering we're developing there," she explains. "We're embracing the single agency, single P&L, single brand and single reputation concept, which will drive more alignment and excellence across all parts of the company."



VR allowed test drivers to see Nissan's advanced tech in action without placing anyone in actual danger. The 360° experience gives users a first-person, interactive, driver's-seat perspective through a variety of close calls with pedestrians, cars and trucks.



Critical Mass content studio Wander joined with the Travel Alberta account team to storyboard, plan, direct, shoot, edit, and produce a special video series showing the province at its fullest and asking potential visitors, "Are you ready?"



To spread the message that AT&T's service ranks best among wireless carriers, a series of display videos and fake "how-to" clips made a joke out of mediocrity while helping audiences see the absurdity of settling for less than the best.



"Leaps" is a Bayer initiative to solve 10 of humanity's most difficult challenges. Critical Mass partnered with Bayer to create an experiential installation that symbolized a story of perseverance and launched it at Summit LA – a gathering of innovators for whom "impossible" doesn't exist.



Critical Mass helped Rihanna's Clara Lionel Foundation (CLF) rebrand and activate the new branding through a redesigned website that included a new CLF mandate, a 360°-video shot in a Malawi school, and an invitation to "join the revolution."



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Guys don't like to talk about prostate exams, but they do like to talk about sports, music and movies. So to get guys and doctors talking, McCann took the old latex exam glove and re-imagined it as The Famous Fingers Collection: gloves modeled after the famous hands of Hall of Famers, musicians and superheroes. Because making it easier for guys to talk about prostate cancer just might save their lives.

McCann's Mastercard campaigns also tie the brand to Canadian culture. Last year the agency picked up Midas Awards for its "Priceless Surprises – Ball Hockey" work, which provided a special surprise to a Mastercard cardholder: a deluxe rink on his street and a visit from his hero, Darryl Sittler. Meanwhile, the "Priceless Tables" initiative in Toronto let cardholders enjoy fine dining on the Roy Thomson Hall stage during a live orchestra performance. Digital spots and social directed to the Mastercard Priceless Cities website.

"Finding a way for Mastercard to continue to stand for pricelessness in Canada was a big part of that campaign's success," Timms says.

Humour has proven to be a winning approach for Prostate Cancer Canada, which wants men to have their prostates checked. Last year McCann won 17 awards from Cannes, The One Show, The Crystals Awards, the Clio Awards and the LIAs for its "The Alternatives" campaign, which encompasses online video, radio and

print. It imagines awkward scenarios in which men too uncomfortable to have their doctor perform the exam would instead do so themselves or ask a friend or – gasp – their mother.

The agency followed up with the "Famous Fingers Collection" campaign, which this time has men being tested with latex gloves modeled after legendary characters such as Babe Ruth or Frankenstein. It won gold and silver at the LIAs.

"The subject matter may be immensely serious, but to resonate with the people we're trying to reach, using humor or pulling at people's heartstrings – common approaches in mass advertising channels – is a big part of that success," Timms says.

He adds that McCann is embracing a more "creative-first mentality," which is how the agency has been reinvigorating itself globally. "Around the world and here at home we believe creativity is the only way to survive. It's rooted in a powerful belief that our role is to help brands play meaningful roles in people's lives."

The agency continues to invest in proprietary research to support that belief. In 2016, it released *Truth About Canadians*, an in-depth industry report in partnership with Ipsos. The nationwide, bilingual, quantitative and qualitative initiative takes the pulse of Canadians with respect to their opinions, values and expectations of modern brands.

In 2018, McCann followed up with the provocative *The Truth About Canadian Women*, which explores the changing lives, roles and expectations of women and their effect on the new norms in Canada. The agency leverages its research on its clients' businesses on a daily basis.

McCann

Helping make brands meaningful

With a new CEO at the helm, a slew of international awards and client Chevrolet Canada named one of *strategy's* Brands of the Year, 2018 was strong for McCann. Ryan Timms, SVP, managing director, McCann Toronto implores the industry, "Just wait and see what's next."

Simon Sikorski, who previously served as chief client officer for IPG's Craft and worked for McCann Erickson in the U.K. and McCann Worldgroup in New York, took over in January as CEO of McCann Worldgroup Canada. "Simon is the consummate integrator across divisions and disciplines," Timms says. "His presence will help us tap into the company's diverse talent to find the best ways to solve a business problem – whether through traditional marketing forms, experiential, deep digital or our McCann Health practice."

This past year the agency brought in new clients and delivered award-winning programs for major players.

Celebrating Canadian values was the key approach on Petro-Canada's "Live by the Leaf" campaign. McCann led strategy and creative and the brand refresh extended to stations. "We were able to demonstrate how much we understood what they needed to do – to connect with Canadians over one of the most commoditized products in a more meaningful manner," Timms says.

The mass campaign encompasses an anthem video set to Stompin' Tom Connors' "My Stompin' Grounds" and amusing shorter spots about distinctly Canadian behavior rolling out on TV, digital, social and a microsite. "We've given them a platform from which they can talk to Canadians where it's not just about gas prices and location, but rather to demonstrate they're Canadian, too," Timms says.



To amplify Mastercard's "Start Something Priceless" platform in Canada, McCann leveraged the client's new strategic partnership with Cirque du Soleil to show how a spark of inspiration can lead to something much bigger. The campaign features the story of a boy who attends a Mastercard Priceless Cities experience and becomes inspired by a performer backstage. He becomes determined to follow in her footsteps and start something priceless in his own life.



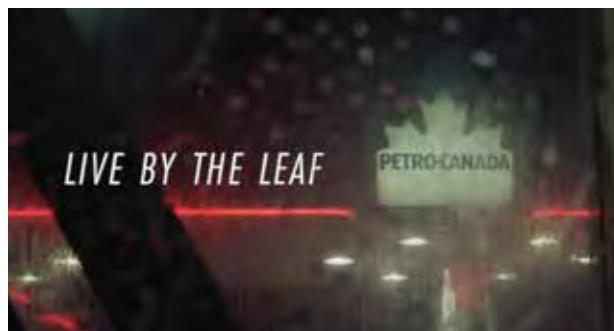
McCann evolved Chevrolet's hockey strategy from a brand sponsorship to an ownable platform that rewarded Pee wee teams for giving back to their communities. Whereas so many programs focus on how teams perform on the ice, the agency created the Chevrolet Good Deeds Cup to inspire and reward teams that had the best season off the ice.



Ninety-five percent of new moms plan to breastfeed, but by the end of month one, 60% introduce formula. Nestlé Good Start had to capture the attention of these moms during this key time. So McCann launched a platform via online video, paid and organic social and YouTube bumpers reminding them that no matter what, their baby will always think mom is the best.



Even potato farmers don't really talk about potato herbicides, so it was a challenge to convince them to buy top-of-the-line product Sencor STZ herbicide. The way in was to educate farmers that by using the premium brand they could spend less time worrying about weeds and more time enjoying the little things in life. The "Grower Vacations" campaign resonated and the product launch surpassed first-year sales goals by 25%.



Petro-Canada's "Live by the Leaf" came to life as a mantra Canadians could rally around and as a playful reflection of our shared realities. McCann executed a brand re-launch that touched everything from advertising to in-store retail signage. It isn't about a fleeting moment – it's a way of life. It's an ever-present idea and an ongoing patriotic nod that benefits a brand Canadians interact with as part of their daily routine.



Tourism Vancouver needed a new destination brand identity that captured the city's stunning beauty and progressive nature. Starting with the promise that Vancouver connects people and inspires them to live with passion, McCann created a modern, welcoming design system inspired by a compass rose and an accompanying ad launch campaign in online video, digital and social, transit, OOH and radio.



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Target's geo-targeted mobile campaign for Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism delivered 800% more click-throughs than the industry benchmark, despite requiring two clicks. Targeting transit hubs and busy venues, this hugely successful campaign won Best of Show at the HSMIA / Adria Awards in NYC, competing against over 40 countries in the 'Oscars of travel and tourism'.

Target

Outsiders see things differently

In Newfoundland, a place known for being off-kilter and nonconformist, Target fits right in.

Target's outsider reputation is firmly rooted in St. John's, which, at first glance, seems an unlikely place to run a creative agency. But since everything in Newfoundland is seen through a cultural lens unlike any other on the planet, how could it be located anywhere else?

"Newfoundland is our secret ingredient, our most powerful differentiator," says Noel O'Dea, the director of strategic and creative planning who founded the shop in 1980. "We see things differently here, and that changes how we think, how we go about solving a problem."

O'Dea says Newfoundland is bursting with creativity, writers, storytellers, musicians and artists. "That inspires and shapes everything, and powers our strategic thinking and creative work for brands. Clients love the unconventional and unexpected perspective we bring to the table."

Clients probably don't mind the results either. Target's won multiple golds at the CASSIES for advertising effectiveness, even taking home a Grand Prix. Those awards join hundreds of others – from the Gold Lion (which it won for Irving Oil's retail business), to London International statues, and this year *strategy* ranked Target in the top 15 on its Creative Report Card.

While Target is best known for its destination branding and tourism work for Newfoundland and Labrador, it has deep experience working for clients in a wide range of categories – Maple Leaf Foods and Unilever, Rogers and Bell, Molson and Labatt, and several Air Canada brands.

"Smart clients are always searching for the road less traveled in order to differentiate their brands and break away from the competitive pack. We take the road less travelled," says 20-year Target veteran Catherine Kelly, director of account management.

Still, Target's "Find Yourself" tourism campaign is perhaps a rarity in advertising. "It is not a lie," says Kelly. "It's not pretending to sell Newfoundland as something it's not. It is true to the place, the people, and the culture. And it works gangbusters."

But it's doing that in strategic, targeted ways. Past the gorgeous cinema and TV spots are robust mobile and geo-targeting digital campaigns that Kelly says target well-educated and sophisticated travellers seeking authentic cultural experiences instead of the manufactured experiences of ordinary tourist destinations.

Since 2005, the "Find Yourself" campaign has become recognized as the most successful, most awarded tourism campaign in North America with more than 330 awards for creative, brand building and effectiveness.

All of that success grows from one office on the St. John's waterfront and its close-knit group of about 40 staffers from around the world. O'Dea says 40 is their "sweet spot" because there's "no bureaucracy and no BS. Our senior people get to be 100% hands-on working with clients, rather than 'administrating'. We love what we do. That's the magic of small."

In that unpretentious office, high on the wall is Target's mantra – "Creativity is a powerful business tool," a reminder to those 40 "outsiders" of what sets them apart. "We love underdogs," said Kelly. "We love being outsiders. And we always, always dig deep to discover the elusive road less travelled."



IcebergFinder.com is a fully responsive and interactive site that uses real-time data to locate and track icebergs drifting along the coastline. Target's digital teams designed and developed this hugely popular HSMIA platinum award winner "as a useful and helpful tool for travellers" which also provides Google Map directions, and enables photo sharing.



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A+19MICON

The 2019 AToMiCon was held March 5 at Toronto's Arcadian Court. The day-long content marketing conference was kicked-off with remarks by advisory board co-chairs Andrea Danovitch at Interac and Susan Irving at PepsiCo. The AToMiC Awards followed that evening, where Canada's top campaigns and programs were recognized alongside the Canadian Paralympic Committee and BBDO's "Paralympic Network," which nabbed the Grand Prix.





1. The packed house at AToMiCon. | 2. RBC's Andrew Kooren spoke about connecting with youth. | 3. AToMiCon co-chair and Interac marketer, Andrea Danovitch. | 4. Simon Joly from Ubisoft chatted about its new content program. | 5. AToMiCon co-chair and PepsiCo's Susan Irving. | 6. Head of Globe Content Studio Sean Stanleigh. | 7. Stephen Scarrow dives into KFC's marketing strategy. | 8. Berkly Foster demos L'Oreal's ModiFace tech. | 9. Chloe Efthymiou from RYOT Studio at Verizon Media. | 10. Keynote speaker, Louis Arbetter of PepsiCo Content Studio. | 11. Lg2's Chris Hirsch picks up some awards. | 12. AToMiCon host Steve Miller from Fuse takes to the podium. | 13. Shereen Ladha from McCann won the New Establishment: Innovator award. | 14. AToMiCon Awards co-chair and FCB's Nancy Crimi-Lamanna. | 15. Creative Report Card toppers: Cossette's Peter Ignazi and Carlos Moreno (#1 CDs); SickKids' Kate Torrance (#1 Brand) and AdVice's Jason Chaney (#1 Planner) | 16. Jordan Hamer and Spencer Dingle, both ACDs at Cossette. | 17. Ian Mackenzie and Andrea Cook take home some glass awards for FCB/Six. | 18. Ari Elkouby, ECD at Wunderman Thompson. | 19. Aaron Starkman from Rethink is all smiles after making many (many) trips to the stage. | 20. A meeting of power brokers over beers: Ian Gordon of Loblaw, Mike Welling of doug&partners, Sharon McLeod of Unilever (and our Marketer of the Year), David Bigioni of Canopy Growth, and Stephen Kouri of Smucker Foods. | 21. Courtney Dionne and Tom Kenny, both of BBDO Toronto pick up the Grand Prix for the Canadian Paralympic Committee.

Don't let your smart home make you dumb.

Introducing the SmartAss Home: a smart device that keeps you honest, so you don't turn into a complete moron.

Smart home devices are great. But let's face it – they're making shoppers lazy (and frankly, it's a little embarrassing). That's where the SmartAss Home comes in: any time you ask it for something that should be self-explanatory to a functioning adult, the SmartAss Home will call you out, instead of calling out the answer.



Hey SmartAss, give my new blender five stars.

If you can use a blender, you can write a review.

Hey SmartAss, order me an Uber.

Are you seriously too lazy to use an app?

Hey SmartAss, is it sunny out?

Stick your head out the window.

Hey SmartAss, order me a PB&J sandwich.

Do you want the crusts cut off too?

Hey SmartAss, what's the capital of Canada?

Ordering: "First grade textbook"

Hey SmartAss, add deodorant to my cart.

Pretty glad I don't have a nose right now.

It's the next evolution of the smart home. It's not just 'smarter' than other devices, it's assier! The SmartAss Home: the ultimate safeguard against shopper stupification. Order yours, and avoid a future where you'll be completely helpless when the power goes out.

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