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## AGENCY OF THE YEAR

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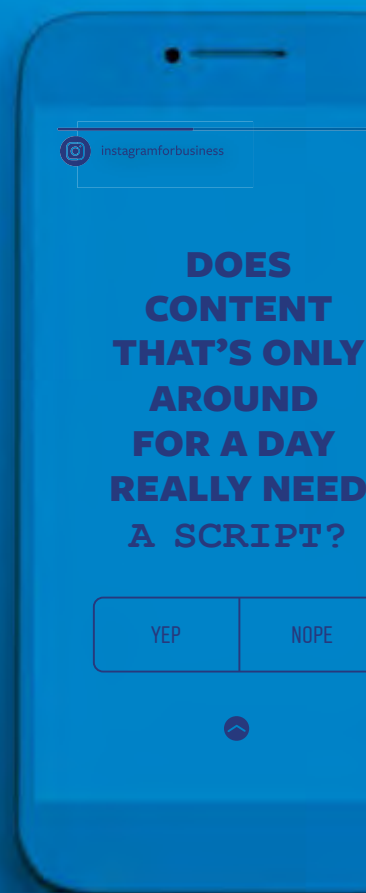
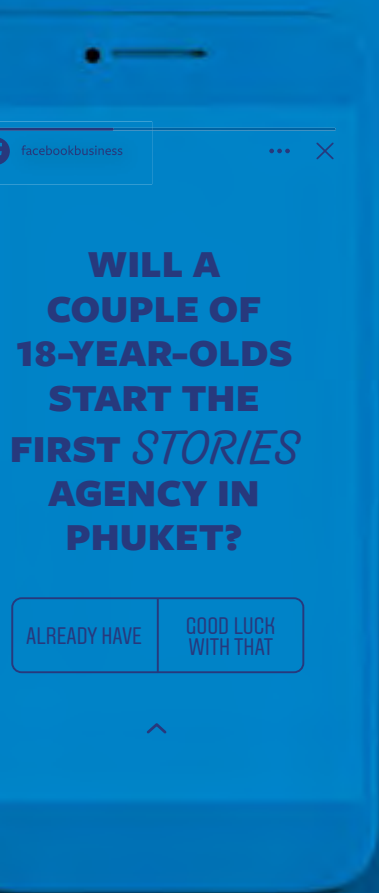
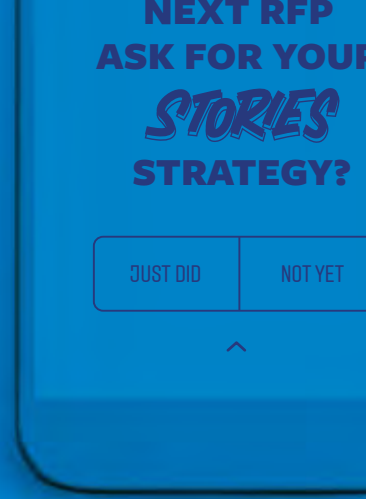
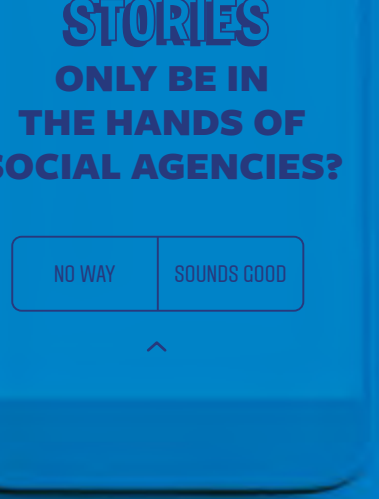


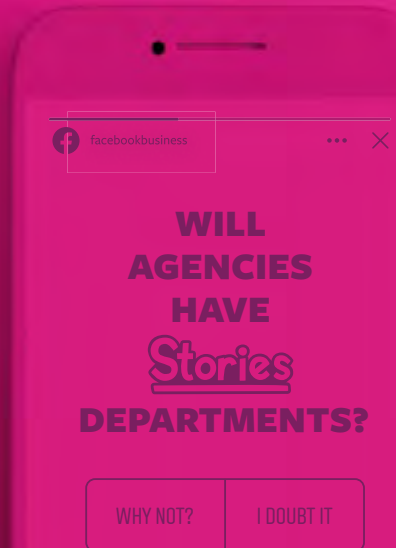
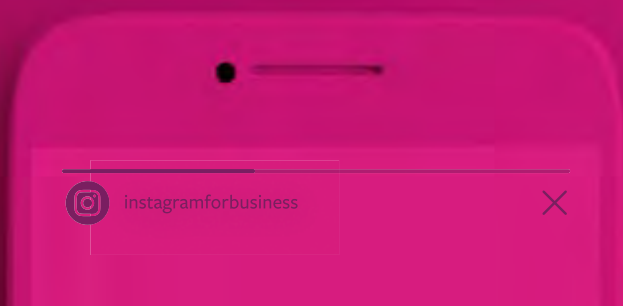
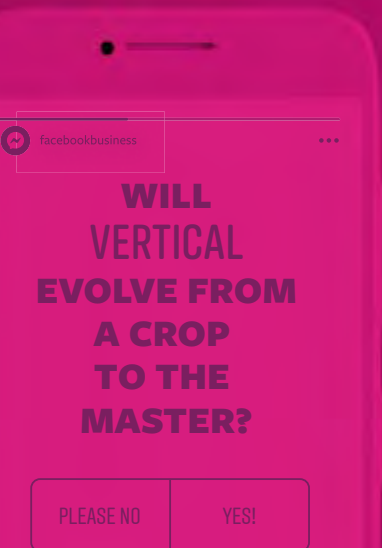
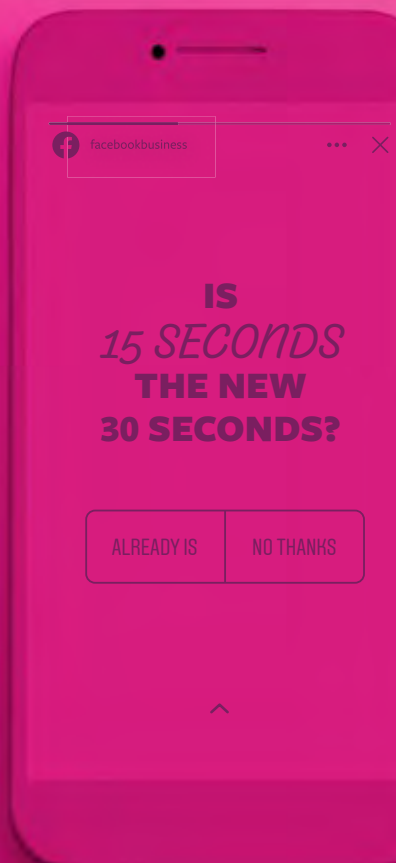
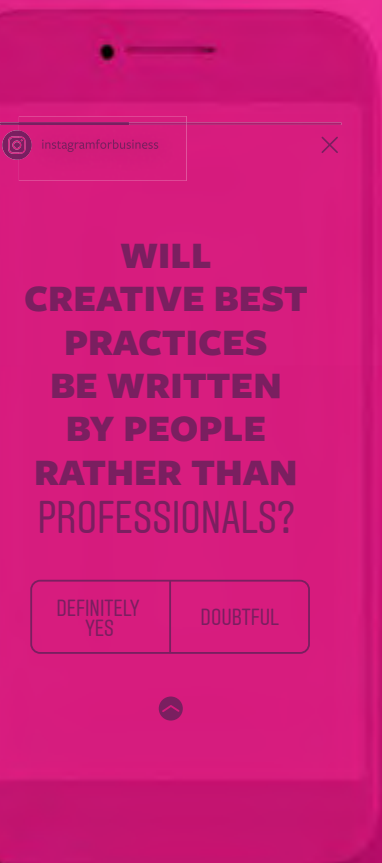
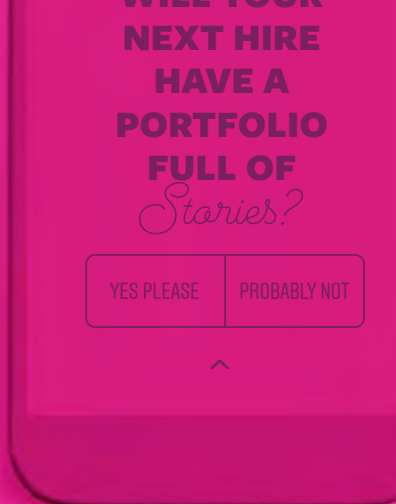
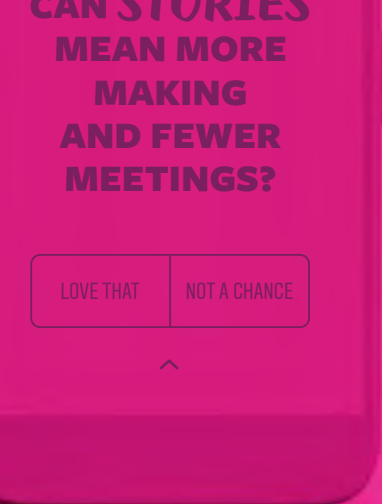
**MARKETERS OF THE YEAR**

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The AOY Campaign of the Year went to none other than Taxi for its visually arresting "#Unignorable" work for United Way.

13

### Marketers of the Year

Mastering strategies, changing perceptions, building purpose and unifying brands. It's all in a day's work for these marketing heads.

29

### Danone at 100

The brand's centenary calls for product innovation that's steeped in a decades-old ethos: health and happiness through food.

33

### Agency of the Year

All the big and small creative, design, digital, media and PR firms, coupled with the work that broke through.

**4 Editorial** Agencies bring sensitivities to brands • **8 Upfronts** What's a-brewing in the beer category, plus all the top news hits from *StrategyDaily* reporters in the year 2019 • **10 Passion Project** Steve Mykolyn's cathartic approach to dealing with death now comes in the form of a limited-edition soundtrack • **72 Marketing Evolution Summit and Strategy Awards** All the speakers and winners that graced the Arcadian Court stage in pictures • **74 Back Page** Wunder levels the playing field for next year's AOY



#### ON THE COVER:

Stop wondering how we shrunk and shelved that many Rethinkers onto three planks of wood. We didn't, they did. Under the auspices of us wanting to do a "tribute for Rethink's 20th," the team created a cover that does all 17 partners (and counting?) across the Gold Design, Silver Digital and Gold Agency of the Year's three hubs. Here it goes... deep breathe... On the top shelf is Morgan Tierney, Christina Yu, Mike Dubrick, Darren Yada; in the middle is Sean McDonald, Chelsea Stoelting, Joel Holtby, Bob Simpson, Aaron Starkman, Hans Thiessen, Laura Rioux; and at the bottom is Glen Chalcraft, Nicolas Quintal, Alex Lefebvre, Rob Tarry, Caleb Goodman and Leia Rogers. In the paraphrased words of the founders, they prefer to put people, not awards, on pedestals.

# Brand thinkers make the industry go 'round

**A**ngus Tucker shared some profound words during a meeting I had with the CCO at his office in the fall. The conversation was originally to catch-up on John St. but somehow found its way to the industry.

He said, of which I half-quote in a profile on the Bronze winner in our Agency of the Year report (p.33), "We [agencies] need to stop seeing ourselves as content creators. That is so incredibly limiting as to who we are, what we do, what we provide, and what we charge... We are brand thinkers, who create content underneath overall thought."

Referring to the disposability of creativity as short-termism consumes brands, and some agencies follow suit, the ad vet concluded by saying the industry should do better in "saying that, protecting that, promoting that."

Without actually dropping the "c" word, Tucker also seemingly took aim at turf-creeping and numbers-driven suits that are, arguably, creatively tone-deaf by saying that agencies are better equipped to bring a more human side to commercial entities.

Strategy's Agency of the Year issue is one that gives creative players – and abutting digital shops, design studios, media agencies and PR firms – the opportunity to defend and promote the powers they hold.

And that they do.

Some of this year's crop of top shops, as you'll read, have the sensitivities and the skillsets to help brands find and build upon their purpose (that's purpose with a small and a big "P").

Gold AOY winner Rethink is supporting IKEA and A&W's eco-altruism in campaigns with healthy shelf-

lives. While John St. has been designing the foundational frameworks for brand positionings and platforms that have legs – just as any long-term agency partner would (John St. carries 10-year relationships with Maple Leaf Foods, Winners and Tangerine, and another 18 with Kruger).

Others are promoting pluckiness. Narrative, this year's Gold PR shop, has a history of helping company leaders express their corporate bravery. Now the firm is translating that into a new type of "creative bravery" through things like Casey House's hard-hitting anti-stigma stunts. Initiative, the Silver Media agency, says it imparts its value of courage to the heads of brands like Oh! Henry.

Boldness, says Hershey's Jackson Hitchon, was not a typical characteristic of the confectionary co. But after conversations with Anomaly, it decided to stop playing it safe, landing on brazen campaigns that tap into the cultural zeitgeist (and landed Hitchon on the 2019 Marketer of the Year list, p.13). None of which would have been possible without the input and collaboration of its partners.

If humble agencies won't "protect and promote" their powers of building empathy, humanity and brave thinking in the brands they work with each day, then consider it done in our year-end issue. You'll want to clear your schedule. It's a big one.

Jennifer Horn, editor



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## ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER'S NOTE

# Reengineering Goliath with data, and David with scale

"DON'T BE PARALYZED BY data, sometimes the reason someone doesn't come back is, well, no reason." Walmart's Ben Baker's comments are spot on when it comes to using data effectively.

Returning from Ad Week New York, I felt the conversation had shifted from having data for data's sake, to using data to craft breakthrough narratives that shape culture and move the needle – and this is where we're seeing a sweet spot for brands.

Another shift that's taking place: the Goliaths are honing in on DTC turf (think Nike's subscription service), while the Davids are quickly growing up and donning a top funnel strategy.

Digital-born players already have the data and they've been reading the tea leaves, so zeroing in on their audience comes with ease. I didn't know I needed a new mattress until Casper paired one with sleeping baby animals. But they did, and now I do too.

Our 2019 Marketers of the Year all made shifts and took risks using data-fuelled strategies. They also doubled down on what their brands stand for and leaned into being bold.

Canadian Tire Corporation's Susan O'Brien unified her retail banners and steered the ship behind Triangle Rewards, a program that modernized the company and

brought mass amounts of data to its teams. She also used consumer insights to hijack Black Friday for SportChek shoppers and shifted perceptions of an entire nation to think of Canadian Tire as the place for "new" products.

Scotiabank's Clinton Braganza pulled a hat trick where he miraculously managed to get sports fans to call its stadium by its new Scotiabank Arena name. He showed marketers how they can fast-track naming rights deals to get the most out of their investment and how to go against the brand bible by colouring outside the bank's signature hue.

Fountain Tire's Denise Gohl-Eacrett zeroed in on shoppers' pain points by solving them. Tires aren't an exciting or sexy purchase, but Gohl-Eacrett transformed her brand's approach with a complete overhaul, putting marketing dollars where they count.

Through this redo of the brand, she was able to reinvigorate the 63-year-old company.

Jackson Hitchon led Hershey Canada to become the number one brand in the country this year. The marketer drove brand love for consumers under its "Life is Sweet" platform, launched Reese into space and led Oh Henry! into the cannabis conversation at exactly the right time (4:25, of course). Through

Hitchon, the company has created bold brands that are grounded in consumer insight. He says breaking through is about taking risks.

And finally, Clorox's Matt Kohler has been on a mission to drive innovation at the CPG company and lead with sustainability via top-down action that allows his brands to succeed with purpose.

Glad is pushing against single-use plastics and investing in education to reduce garbage (and ultimately garbage bags). Kohler attributes the eco transformation to the company's acquisition of Burt's Bees, and experiencing the impact first-hand of being purpose-led.

These brands are taking advantage of all the science-side marketing tools to de-risk bold new ideas, allowing them the freedom to make change quickly and confidently, and invest at a level that has real impact.

Using data is also no new task for the winners behind the Media Innovation Awards. This year's cases were backed by insights that paved the way for true innovation across all media, so mark your calendars and come out to The Carlu on November 28th to find out which plans and programs will take home a gold M.

Cheers,  
**Lisa Faktor, associate publisher  
Strategy/MiC/Stimulant/CARD**





MEDIA'S BRIGHTEST MOMENTS  
(AND STARS) REVEALED.

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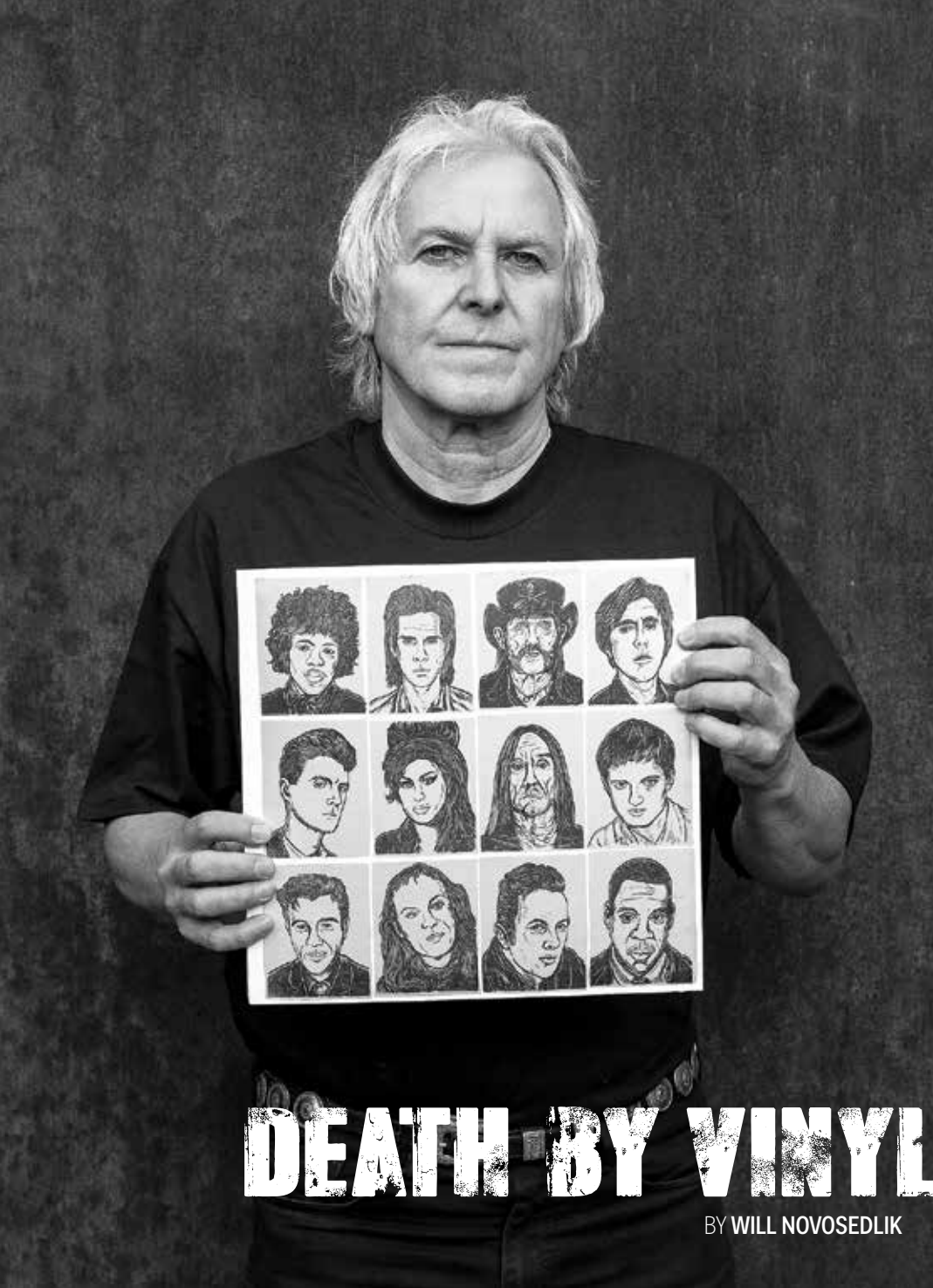
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HOW AD MAN **STEVE MYKOLYN'S** 30-YEAR ROMANCE WITH MORTALITY HAS COME TO LIFE IN THE FORM OF A PHOTO BOOK, EXHIBIT, DOCUMENTARY AND NOW A SOUNDTRACK ON VINYL.

**E**ven though I am closer now to meeting my maker than I've ever been and starting to think about how my tombstone should read, there are no algorithms sending tombstone ads to any of my social feeds.

Mortality is not a subject that comes up too often in the world of advertising. That's because, as Don Draper said in an early episode of *Mad Men*, advertising is about one thing and one thing only:

happiness. So when a creative director fashions an artefact completely and lovingly obsessed with death, you sit up and take notice.

The creative director in question is Steve Myklyn, former CCO of Taxi. Myklyn's creative drive needed more than what he could feed it at the office. So he always had a side project on the go, something that had nothing to do with commerce or clients. Something far more akin to art than to advertising.

In 1991 that hunger inspired him to begin a creative collaboration with photographers, printers, illustrators, musicians, filmmakers and writers on what can only be called a magnificent 30-year meditation on the subject of death. His first partner in this mortuary enterprise was photographer Russell Monk. They were both interested in the Mexican tradition of *el Día de los Muertos*, or "Day of the Dead," the

annual festival in which families visit the graves of dead relatives to feast, sing, drink, dance and remember their dearly departed. Says Myklyn: "This was 1991 so very few Canadians were aware of 'Day of the Dead,' whereas now, around Halloween, you can't swing a dead cat without hitting a sugar skull." So they grabbed some gear, bought plane tickets and off they went.

After an eight-hour drive from Acapulco (don't ask), they arrived

in the town of Patzcuaro, ground zero for el Dia. As morbid as it sounds, *el Dia de Los Muertos* is quite a happy occasion, reflecting a culture that, unlike ours, considers death to be a natural part of life. They documented the events with photos, then came back to Toronto and within three months they had mounted an exhibit and created a 48-page photo book about the experience, complete with excerpts from Mexican poet Octavio Paz' *Labyrinth of Solitude*.

But that was not enough. In 1998, Mykolyn returned to Patzcuaro with a film crew. And what a crew it was. His DOP was Chris Soos, who had shot Marilyn Manson and David Bowie videos with Floria Sigismondi and the Madonna BMW film directed by Guy Ritchie. He had cinematographer Ray Dumas as AD, who worked on award-winning videos for Our Lady Peace and Zero Vodka. And he had editor Mark Hajek on board, a veteran of Partners and Stealing Time.

"I had no clue what I was doing." Mykolyn explains that "It's less a documentary and what I would call a 'concoct-umentary' in that it was shot with all sorts of different film stock, some black and white, some colour, which I got from a friend, Richard D'Alessio. I went to him and said, 'I need some film but I have no money,' and he said, 'You can have everything that's in that fridge over there' and it was all ends of different film stocks."

Other collaborators included illustrator Gary Clement, who did a poster and Neil Stewart of Anstey Bookbinding, with whom Mykolyn had worked on the original 1991 photo project. And last but not least, Mykolyn enlisted the help of long-time friend Mario Pietrangeli to compose a soundtrack, a unique cross between surf and spaghetti western music which Mykolyn dubs 'surf-ghetti'. The film was featured at Hot Docs, Toronto's Royal Cinema, HBO Latin America, and closed out Hispanic Month at the Smithsonian Museum.

But the meditation was not over. The year 2017 saw the loss of some of the world's greatest musical artists: Leonard Cohen, David Bowie, Leon Russell and Prince. "It put me in a state of shock," recounts Mykolyn. *Los Muertos* was suddenly on his mind again.

Thus began the process of reviving the *el Dia* soundtrack from the '90s, combining it with music from all of his favourite musicians, and packaging it in a sleeve that would be a kind of advent calendar of artists that he had always admired – some dead, some alive.

There would be both a living and a posthumous portrait of each of the 48 artists, the latter below and the former above it in the form of a peel-off. The idea being that when they died, you would



peel off the 'living' portrait to reveal the posthumous, skeletal one.

For the portraits, Mykolyn enlisted the skills of illustrator Chad Eaton, who works in a woodcut style similar to that of the great Mexican political artist Jose Guadalupe Posada, famous for his countless illustrations of *el Dia* figures. It took him two years to complete the 96 (48 dead, 48 alive) illustrations. When I asked him why he did it, Eaton replied, "I just liked the idea. Steve seemed like a good guy. Didn't really think about how much work it would be."

At some point Mykolyn showed the idea to his son, Jesse. He said, "It's cool but it would be way cooler if you made it a scratch-off." It took two years, again working alongside Neil Stewart, to figure out how to make a scratch-off with 48 images across four different surfaces.

As a final karmic twist, one of the tunes on the album is called *Angel on Horseback*, composed and recorded in 1980 by a guy named Mike Beddoes. The song is about finding the body of a dead woman on a beach after a storm. Mykolyn had loved it back then but couldn't find it when he wanted a copy. After a lot of digging, he found Beddoes still living out in B.C. He learned that the song was inspired by a poem called *Dream Pedlary* by Beddoes' great-grandfather, Thomas Lovell, who

was nicknamed the "poet of death" and ended his own life in 1849. So to complete the meditation, Mykolyn got Beddoes to record a spoken version of *Dream Pedlary* for the album, aptly named *Songs For A Funeral*.

*Songs For A Funeral* will be released in November 2019 on vinyl as a limited edition of 144 copies. There is a living edition of 48 on white vinyl, a dead edition of 48 on black vinyl and a ghost edition of 48 on transparent vinyl.

Looking back on the entire journey, Mykolyn says, "Now I have the soundtrack for my own funeral. It drives my partner crazy when I speak of my death so matter-of-factly. But I'm sure the Mexicans would understand."

---

*Will Novosedlik wears many hats: he is the editor of Applied Arts Magazine, a writer, a brand strategist and a business development fellow at research think tank Human Futures Studio. He is also a long-time collaborator with Steve Mykolyn.*

*Songs for a Funeral launches in November at gallery MGK127 in Toronto, Ontario.*

**Right:** Mykolyn, the former CCO of Taxi, has been chasing his passion project for three decades, culminating with a limited edition vinyl record of *Songs for a Funeral* this year.





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## MARKETERS OF THE YEAR



**THERE WAS A TIME WHEN BEING NAMED** Marketer of the Year entailed having the buzziest advertising. Now it's about so much more. // As we head into a new decade, what these marketers have in common is a consumer-centric lens, and a mission to build platforms with legs. // For Fountain Tire, that meant Denise Gohl-Eacrett retired the longest-running pitchman in Canada, to focus in on key purchase drivers in innovative ways. // For Matt Kohler, the challenge was to translate purpose into meaningful action, and bring the eco ethos in Burt's Bees to life across the Clorox portfolio. // Jackson Hitchon jolted Hershey into a new marketing stratosphere and united its brands under a sweet new umbrella. // Susan O'Brien at Canadian Tire also united a family of brands, spearheading the launch of a new loyalty program, and also changing perceptions of the 100-year-old retailer. // Our top Marketer of the Year, as per peer voting, brought a new versatility to Scotiabank's identity. Clinton Braganza also fast tracked the bank's naming rights ROI by retraining fans to embrace the Scotiabank Arena. // So check out what the top marketers got up to this year and be inspired to tackle the next decade.



## CLINTON BRAGANZA IS SCOTIABANK'S MIRACLE MAKER

The CMO keeps things loose as the bank makes good on a massive sports investment.

BY JEREMY LLOYD



Clinton Braganza pulled off a sports miracle.

In the summer of 2018, Scotiabank signed a landmark deal with Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment (MLSE) worth a reported \$800 million. The CMO helped craft that blockbuster deal – taking the bank's wide-ranging sports sponsorships into the stratosphere by extending its support for the Toronto Maple Leafs and making its affiliated Tangerine brand the official bank of the Toronto Raptors. But that wasn't the miracle.

The new partnership also gave Scotiabank naming rights to the teams' home venue for the next 20 years, replacing founding sponsor Air Canada on the marquee. That wasn't the miracle either.

The deal was perfectly timed to put Scotiabank in the spotlight when the Raptors won their first NBA championship this year, putting the bank's name into circulation across global sports media. Although, still, not the miracle.

Getting Toronto sports fans to stop calling that arena on Bay Street "the ACC" – that was the miracle.

Fans are fickle. They generally care more about the ritual of sport than the business goals of corporate sponsors. But as the Leafs began their 2019 season, the words "Scotiabank Arena" were on their lips and in their search histories, thanks to Scotiabank's customer-centric strategies and fan-level activations. It's a major win that, along with a refresh of the bank's marketing doctrine, shows Scotiabank is finding success through more flexible branding.

The bank has long-positioned itself as "Canada's hockey bank" through millions in sponsorship investments with the NHL, *Hockey Night in Canada* and individual teams at every level of play. The MLSE deal made sense, given that history.

But breaking Torontonians' 20-year habit of associating the rink with Air Canada would take more than new signs above the door. Spare a thought for poor Rogers Communications every time a Blue Jays fan says they're going to "The Dome," which hasn't been the ballpark's name since 2005.

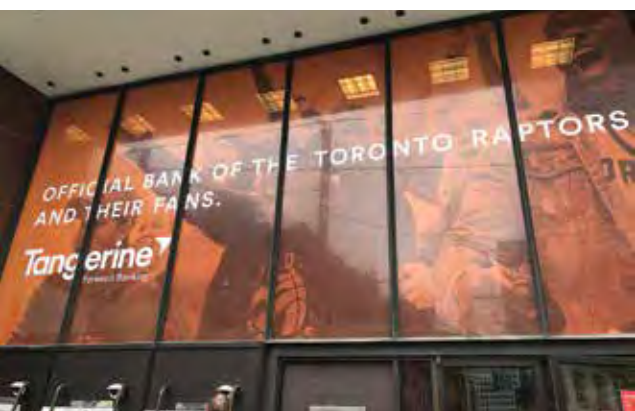
"Compared to other, similar re-namings we've tracked in Canada, we have had a much faster adoption," Braganza tells *strategy*. "I can't share exact comparative numbers, but we've measured our name adoption at over 80% across the [Greater Toronto Area]" and awareness has reached 84%. "We think that's a major win." Searches for "Scotiabank Arena" have also increased 104% since last year.

To drive that adoption, yes, there was an ad campaign that showed Maple Leaf players proclaiming Scotiabank Arena as their home. But Braganza also took a customer-centric approach to find ways to



improve fans' experience of the venue.

For example, Scotiabank upgraded the large digital screen that broadcasts games into Maple Leaf Square (the city-block-sized outdoor area set aside for fan events and viewings during Raptors and Leafs games). The old 30-by-50-foot screen had relatively low definition and wasn't quite large enough to serve the massive crowds that turned up for big events. The new HD screen now



measures 40-feet-by-78 feet. The bank also refurbished the Scotia Club bar and restaurant (formerly the Air Canada Club) on the building's 400 level, upgrading — not just rebranding — the facility.

"The venue is 20-years-old, and going forward we want the fan experience to be agnostic of the building's age," says Braganza. So fans should expect more updates and upgrades over the coming year.

The bank also created the widely successful Scotia Perks loyalty program for its customers, giving them access to the Scotia Club and a dedicated entrance at the arena, as well as discounts on tickets, concessions and merchandise. The program

saw 65,000 enrollments in its first year.

A partnership with Metrolinx, however, expanded Scotiabank's customer-first approach beyond the venue itself, because sports are more than just where you sit to watch the game.



Toronto's transit system is a major part of game-day experiences since many ticket holders take public transport to the 20,000-seat venue. To honour both the Maple Leafs and Raptors' 2018 home openers, Scotiabank handed out 20,000 branded and pre-loaded Presto payment cards, giving attendees a free ride to and from those games on TTC and Go vehicles.

This year's Leafs season opener saw another arena addition that served as a symbol of Scotiabank's new branding philosophy. Above that new screen in Maple Leaf Square sits Scotiabank's new illuminated sign that, on game day, displayed the brand's name in bright blue.

Canada's big-five banks have been defined for decades by their brand colours. Braganza says "Scotiabank has been Canada's red bank" and putting the bank's name in blue "is something we wouldn't have allowed ourselves to do in the past."

"Historically, brand marketers have put a box around their visual identity and treated that box as fairly stringent," he says. "We've evolved how we think about our identity —

our colour is a good example."

Red will remain at the core of the identity, but the brand won't be as slavish in its use. Different colours (any colour) will be added to suit the occasion or marketer's need. Braganza's also added the option for official communications to refer to Scotiabank as just "Scotia," just as consumers have been doing colloquially for years.

So, for example, when Scotiabank sponsors an annual hockey game for military families and veterans, the signage may be camouflage green. Local Canadian branches are free to use "Scotia" in their customer-facing marketing, as are branches in its more than 50 other countries.



"Our previous visual identity wasn't designed to be on a screen six inches by three inches big. It was designed for our physical footprint, so we needed to redesign for a digital age to make sure it really pops," Braganza explains of the 2019 brand refresh from Toronto's OneMethod (its sister agency Bensimon Byrne handled creative for the stadium naming rights campaign).

"Our new banking app in Canada has a really simple and beautiful design that evolves where we came from without being a wholly new identity."

The refresh was soft-launched in May and will see a gradual roll-out over the next year.

After five years with the company and less than a year as CMO, Braganza's efforts have already built a solid foundation for the next decade of customer outreach. But taking up the banner of innovation means his marketing team will be ready to adapt in this challenging market.

Regardless of how the Leafs do this season, Scotiabank already has a few ticks in the Win column.

**Clockwise:** Scotiabank's Raptors deal for Tangerine catapulted the brand's sponsorship strategy to new heights; upgrading the Scotiabank Arena and giving out free TTC and GO passes are part of efforts to win over sports fans.

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## JACKSON HITCHON SWEETENS HERSHEY

The marketer shows that boldness is for the brave in wild and wacky consumer-centric campaigns. **BY CATHERINE PHILLIPS**

**I**f you have Hershey on the brain lately, you can blame Jackson Hitchon. Since 2017, the confectionery brand's senior director of marketing has worked overtime to give the company a fresh approach. It's one that targets younger audiences with campaigns that tap into the modern-day zeitgeist: think streaming services, space travel, cannabis, and Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR).

Under Hitchon's leadership, in 2019, Hershey became the #1 confectionary brand in Canada, released a feature-length film, and played in the cannabis-adjacent space, solidifying a strategy that targets millennial and Gen Z snackers.

During his early days with the company in 2012, Hitchon spent time

on the sales side, leading shopper marketing efforts that were driven by consumer insights. That previous work experience allowed him to have a "greater understanding of how to motivate and how to rally an organization around marketing," he says. And today, Hitchon says he's "obsessed with consumer-centric strategies."

Reese, for example, spends "a ton of time talking to Canadians about their snacking habits... [to] get a true idea of what makes people tick and how to connect with what matters to them," he says.

It was from those conversations that Hitchon decided to create a feature-length ASMR film – *Reese The Movie: A Movie About Reese* – and release it on Crave. Alongside Toronto's Anomaly, his team discovered that consumers have their own "Reese ritual," a unique way of enjoying the iconic chocolate and peanut butter treat.

*Reese The Movie* is an 82-minute film featuring five of YouTube's top ASMR creators showing how they enjoy eating a Reese. It's so far garnered over two million views on YouTube and an average view time of more than five minutes. "Compared to a landscape with six-second bumpers and





forced views for 15-second online videos, five minutes of uninterrupted consumer engagement is huge,” Hitchon says.

The insight around snacking rituals also sparked the brand’s “Nothing Else is Reese” campaign in June — a tagline that captures consumer’s love of slowly peeling off Reese’s paper shell before digging in.

“Once you have an insight, you can take bold steps off the bat and know that the consumer is going to come along with you,” Hitchon says.

Continuing on its path to connect with younger snackers, Hitchon also worked with Anomaly to bring the Oh Henry! brand into conversations around Canada’s historic legalization of cannabis in 2018, sparking the creation of the “Oh Henry! 4:25” chocolate bar.

“We determined that, for the longevity and the growth of the brand, we really needed to target younger... And as we were having these conversations, the agency found that there’s a cultural movement around cannabis legalization,” he says of the limited edition bar, which contains extra peanut protein for when the munchies hit five minutes past 4:20.

Hershey hasn’t always been so bold, though. Prior to Hitchon taking on his role, he says the brand had a tendency to stay inside the lines, to a fault. “I would say that we were guilty of playing it safe,” he admits, adding that the key to breaking through is to take risks. “And that doesn’t mean being controversial every time,” he clarifies, “but it does mean understanding your consumer and pushing yourself to connect with them in an inventive way that isn’t done by everybody else.”

The risk of being bold and breaking the rules isn’t lost on Hitchon. “There’s a little bit of nervous energy before you get consumer [feedback on a campaign]. And sure enough you’ll hit some naysayers, but because it’s grounded in a consumer insight, the overwhelming response [is] positive.”

Nothing says “bold and breakthrough” quite like sending your product into space.

When Reese launched its first new product since 1977, it took a nostalgic approach and connected the new Reese’s



#### Pieces Peanut to *E.T.*

In the film, the alien character’s favourite snack was the Reese’s Pieces and so to get him to “try” the new candy, the brand created the “Extra-Terrestrial Sampling Program,” shooting a sample display into space. The award-winning stunt garnered 96 million media impressions and blasted past initial sales targets by 282%.

According to Anomaly partner and ECD, Pete Breton, one word to describe Hitchon is “collaborative.”

“Part of the mandate when Anomaly started working with Hershey was to start

moving the work away from more traditional confectionery food advertising and more towards boundary-pushing work – and Hitchon has been the shepherd, recognizing the ideas and pulling them forward with the agency,” says Breton.

According to Hitchon, some of its marketing is part of the brand’s strategy to target “eating occasions” that are strongly associated with younger consumers. “We seek to reach not just loyalists who love us, but actually making sure that we are top-of-mind for all Canadians,” he says. “So we push ourselves to extend that reach. We try to get into new occasions.”

With a portfolio of brands that list more than 50 retail products, including Cookies ‘n’ Creme, Chipits, Kisses and S’mores, Hitchon says Hershey’s dominates several occasions like baking with Hershey’s Chipits and S’mores. However, the brand didn’t always get credit, with some consumers unaware of the breadth of Hershey’s products.

This required all of the brands and SKUs to be pulled together under one umbrella, with Hershey launching the “Life is Sweet” masterbrand platform in March this year.

Having been around for over 100 years, Hitchon says the Hershey’s brand has “incredibly high awareness,” but it needed to improve consumer’s understanding of what the brand stands for.

Under the “Life is Sweet” umbrella, the brand launched spots that tap into “sweet” moments such as baking cookies with grandma or sitting by the fire at camp.

This more emotional approach came shining through in the brand’s “Dad Jokes” spot, which featured a father and son, who are both deaf, signing jokes while having a Hershey’s treat. The spot, which has garnered over 1.3 million views to date, speaks to the success of the strategy.

“The ‘Life is Sweet’ campaign drives brand love by making consumers aware of its greater beliefs and purpose, things we know are important and relevant to our target,” he says. Although admittedly a simple strategy, Hitchon adds it’s about “realizing how many occasions we have to celebrate and to be happy throughout the day.”

**Top to bottom:** Reese took one giant step for the confectionary category when it shot candy into space to win over *E.T.* film fans; a cannabis-adjacent peanut bar for Oh! Henry tapped into new eating occasions; a dad makes jokes in a spot under the “Life is Sweet” platform, tying Hershey brands under a single umbrella.

CONGRATS

CONGRATS

CONGRATS

Congratulations to Jackson Hitchon on being one of 2019's Marketers of the Year.

Anomaly

# SUSAN O'BRIEN STREAMLINES CANADIAN TIRE

Smart data strategies and a desire for consumer insights wins the race. BY JEREMY LLOYD

**W**hen Susan O'Brien was named SVP, marketing and corporate affairs for the Canadian Tire Corporation in 2016, she was charged with making CTC's family of stores the number one retail brand in the country by 2022, the company's 100th anniversary.

Pursuing the 2022 goal has meant rethinking the composition of marketing teams, launching a new cross-banner loyalty program and investing in a better understanding of the customer experience.

She called 2019 "an accumulation of things we've been working towards for several years. It feels like we're finally on the path to where we want to be... We've truly become customer centric. It's been foundational in where we're taking our marketing."

Industry watchers and consumers have noticed the change. In 2019, an annual Leger survey of 30,000 Canadians named the Canadian Tire retailer the "most admired brand" in the country, jumping from #3 in 2018 and topping global behemoths like Google and Amazon.

Many of O'Brien's challenges are tied to integration.

Think of all the retail chains that have joined CTC in the last 20 years: Mark's in 2001; Sport Chek, National Sports and the other FGL Sports stores in 2011; and PartSource in 2013. At every step, those marketing teams have had the unenviable task of trying to work harmoniously across a group

of formerly independent companies in the housewares apparel, sports and automotive markets.

"If you looked at our organization three years ago, there's been a [lot of] change," says O'Brien. Perhaps the most notable of these changes was shifting loyalty programs to the marketing team, which immediately set out to create a single, unified program for every store in CTC's family.



Triangle Rewards launched across three retailers – Canadian Tire, Mark's and Sport Chek – in 2018. "That conversation started, literally, the second week I was SVP marketing," says O'Brien, who calls the program "essential" to her 2022 goal.

The new loyalty and credit card program was meant to digitize Canadian Tire Money coupons. And while convincing customers to put another app on their phone or card in their wallet is an uphill battle, the value of spending money in exchange for points across CTC's banners was quickly made apparent to Canadians, beating O'Brien's acquisition targets.

"We have about 10 million active customers in the program," O'Brien says. "There are about 13.3 million households in Canada, so those are very good penetration rates. And that's up year-over-year." Today, the program's overall awareness is 52% nationwide.

"I think that's extraordinary for a new program," she says. "For a company that had worked siloed, it was the single most collaborative launch I'd ever seen."

Digitizing the program was about more than just modernization. "We talk a lot about 'one company, one customer,' and a single loyalty program helps build towards that," O'Brien says. "We want to create more of a marketplace effect with all of our retail banners. So in that way, Triangle is the foundation of our strategy for the future – making sure we understand our customer and being able to deliver value beyond an individual retail brand."

O'Brien championed Triangle internally, getting marketing, finance, operations, communications and IT on board with her vision and marshaling their input leading up to launch. She also liaised with Canadian Tire's diverse network of more than 500 independent dealers who have input on marketing and branding issues.

Beyond loyalty programs, promotion planning has also been centralized on O'Brien's watch. "Canadian Tire had really strong data and analytics informing its flyer, but we weren't using that across all banners," she says. To make sure each







store's insights and processes scaled up to serve across CTC, O'Brien says she's hired data scientists and engineers "in the double digits."

CTC has been data rich for some time thanks to its retail, online, credit card and banking operations. "But cleaning that data up to find real insights is a very in-demand skill," she says.

As an example, she points to Canadian Tire's recent Big Red Weekend sale, which made use of cross-store data to change its ad strategy to great effect. Formerly relying on paper flyers with some supporting mass advertising, O'Brien's team dove deep into customer data across all banners to find who had spent money at the event before — a simple data slice, but a valuable one.

"This better informed how we spent money with Facebook and Google," O'Brien says, who, with the help of Touche!, put more frequent digital messaging in front of previous Big Red shoppers, "which dramatically improved our return on advertising spend."

Laying over top of her investments in data and insights, O'Brien also led a new CTC-wide focus on Net Promoter Scores (NPS). It became the marketer's go-to metric — "one measure for us all to rally behind" — to track brand health and long-term success.

While many see NPS as limiting because it's a lag measure (it can take time for positive changes to offset customers' perceptions to move the needle), she's using it to steer future strategies, as well as identify customer experience problems and how to fix them. This approach led to the creation of a new marketing program that has driven strong results.

NPS showed that Canadian Tire customers wanted the newest, hottest products but did not see the retailer as a place to get them. So O'Brien led the charge on "We Do New," a Taxi-created campaign that launched in January 2019 and promoted the newest products on Canadian Tires' shelves across all customer touchpoints.

"['We Do New'] isn't just marketers making TV campaigns," O'Brien says. "It's a program that surfaces new products and examines how we do that from a merchandising perspective," spotlighting items on the retailer's website, in-store and across its media spending footprint. "After we launched, the very next quarter, we had increased nine points on the measure 'Is Canadian Tire an innovative company?'"

O'Brien's quest to steer the number-one Canadian retail brand is an audacious one, and a lot can happen before 2022. The marketer acknowledges that shifting customer expectations keep changing how brands move forward. But if she can overhaul a near-century-old company's marketing teams, lead a new loyalty program and find success in the online shopping arena in just three years — think what the next three years might hold.



**Above:** O'Brien steered the creation and promotion of a cross-banner loyalty program, gaining 53% awareness after just one year.



# CONGRATULATIONS, SUSAN O'BRIEN

SVP, Marketing, Canadian Tire Corp.

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## MATT KOHLER GROWS A GREENER CLOROX

The CPG company is making strides in sustainability, thanks to the marketer's work behind the scenes.

BY JENNIFER HORN

When people hear the name Clorox, they think: namesake bleach, abrasive chemicals, global corporate machine. So some might balk at the idea of the chemical company being seen as a poster child for the green movement.

The California-based manufacturer is made up of a dichotomy of brands that are inherently good and arguably bad for the planet. On one end of its portfolio, it carries natural vegan lip-gloss and clean water filters from Burt's Bees and Brita. On the other, plastic trash bags and liquid bleach from Glad and Clorox.

Over and above the fact that its bleach is actually environmentally benign (no toxic materials end up in water systems as it's broken down into salt), The Clorox Company is one of the few global CPG producers that's driven as much by purpose as it is by profit.

Having set four "Good Growth" targets for 2020, the company challenges itself to think holistically about the lifecycle of its products, from start to finish. Its eco governance spreads from the top of the command chain, downstream and through its supply chain, all the way to the employee and grassroots level.

But Clorox marketers like Matt Kohler still have their work cut out for them.

Speaking at *strategy's* Marketing Evolution Summit, the VP of marketing of the multinational's local arm joked that he's the probably "the only person in Canada who sells garbage bags and colour cosmetics... We also make probiotics, we make collagen, we make charcoal. And when you add up all of our products, we actually have 88% penetration across Canada. That's bigger than Nike, bigger than Apple."

But with many of its products at odds with sentiments around sustainability, he says he's had to work behind-the-scenes to build the company's overarching purpose into its products and marketing.

Kohler explains where it all began. Clorox's entry into greener pastures, so to speak, was through its crowning jewel Burt's Bees. Before the cosmetics brand's acquisition in 2007, the research guys at the CPG were studying consumer megatrends and came up with their own acronym to replace CSR. They called it ESG – environmental, social and good governance. Burt's Bees fit the bill perfectly for a company looking to find Purpose with a capital "P." Unsurprisingly, media and consumer backlash ensued following the \$913 million takeover of the "Earth friendly, natural personal care company."

Kohler recalls the reactions: "Oh my God, you've got this beautiful, wonderful, natural, sustainable business being purchased by one of the largest chemical companies in the world. They are going to destroy it."





"But we didn't change Burt's Bees," proclaims Kohler. "Burt's Bees changed us."

Six years after the marriage of the strange bedfellows, *The Guardian* reported how both companies had made strides in sustainability. Thanks to Clorox's deep pockets, Burt's Bees was able to increase its R&D budget by 50% and even used the moisture-rich recipe for Hidden Valley Ranch (yes, Clorox also owns a salad dressing) to unlock secrets to a more natural skin lotion.

Simultaneously, Clorox looked to Burt's to show it a greener way forward. The cosmetics brand's sustainability officer

**Above:** Beyond Kohler's efforts to have Brita be an aid in the global plastic bottle crises, his team is also supporting the company's CSR goals through programs that supply clean water to marginalized communities in Kenya.

"People don't know how to solve the problem. So we play a role in that."

Kohler says he and his team work with 200 municipalities, and also retailers, to educate them on proper sorting, providing the correct Glad bags to prevent contamination and helping them to structure their programs.

"We work with these parties to help them understand how they can reprogram consumer behaviour so that they can maximize their recapture rate," he says.

"It sounds strange because we're one of the largest garbage bag companies in Canada – but I want to stop selling you garbage bags. I want to get as much out of landfill as possible," says Kohler. "Is that good for us? Yes, because I want you to buy compost and recycling bags. But it's also good for the communities in which we are."

The challenge of driving affinity for Glad – which has experienced 33 consecutive months of share growth as a result of Kohler's efforts – is a little less complicated than a brand with goodness baked in its DNA. Positioned as a borderline health and wellness brand, Brita sells filtration products that rid impurities for better tasting water.

shared an eco "scorecard" that Clorox now uses to encourage suppliers to reduce the environmental impacts on their operations. Many other practices were cross-pollinated and they leaned on each other to survive and thrive. Today, says Kohler, The Clorox Company in Canada ended its fifth year of consecutive growth and Burt's Bees has tripled the size of its business in the last four years. The latter now produces 120 natural cosmetic SKUs.

"We've actually improved all of the statistics. We got zero waste to the landfill, we have a huge supply chain advantage for [Burt's] to make sure that we can source natural ingredients responsibly," says Kohler. "We were also able to increase [The Clorox Company's] recyclability, decrease our carbon footprint, and decrease our greenhouse gases. The marriage of these companies has been profound."

Then came the trickle effect, with Burt's "Greater Good" business model having a Midas touch on many of the CPG co.'s consumer brands, including the biggest plastic elephant in the room – Glad.

It's no easy task giving a brand like Glad purpose when "your best experience with a garbage bag is no experience at all. Many just want to put it on the curb and forget about it," says Kohler.

Consumers don't want to deal with the "ick" factor of handling trash and they're mostly uneducated when it comes to the different municipality garbage programs. So Glad stepped in to "put an end to irresponsible waste," says Kohler, and began investing in ways to fix broken and confusing recycling and compost collection programs.





**Top:** Kohler is working with municipalities to remove Glad bags from landfills.

**Bottom:** National Geographic's Asher Jay's installation for Brita was an affront to single-use plastic.

**Right:** Burt's Bees has brought its good and green values to The Clorox Company.

"Historically, we talked about the lead, mercury, cadmium. We talked about removing those contaminants from water. But it was a product that lacked any sort of emotional connection or purpose," he says.

Three years ago, in an effort to reignite Brita and reverse stagnating sales, Kohler decided to pivot from speaking about people's health to that of the planet. Plastic bottles are the new water contaminants. So he and his team launched a series of campaigns in 2019 with that global crisis as a focal point.

Alongside DentsuBos, Kohler has been trying to get consumers to think about the "small choices that can make a big difference."

Each Brita system can replace up to 1,800 plastic bottles per year, a fact that was highlighted in "The Beauty Beneath" campaign,

which showed underwater views of plastic on the floors of Canada's big and little lakes.

A National Geographic explorer, Asher Jay, also pitched in to share that message.

In "Niagara Now," Jay's art installation is the recreation of a waterfall made up of 900 bottles, the number consumed every five minutes in Toronto (not to mention the number of bottles a Brita Longlast filter can replace).

And finally, to bring a social lens to the issue – as per its ESG principles – the brand created a Hot Docs-aired *Walkumentary*, following a Kenyan woman's gruelling 4.5 hour trek to collect and bring drinkable water back to her family and community.

Each time the skippable video was skipped, a viewer could purchase a "Filter for Good" and the brand gave a year's worth of potable water to someone in Kenya.

Kohler says 55,000 people have benefited from the program to date. "It's entirely



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**Matt Kohler**  
VP, Marketing  
The Clorox Company





transformed communities in Kenya, and through a partnership we work with 6,000 schools to talk about that impact.”

With 2020 around the corner – and three of its four eco targets attained – The Clorox Company is now looking to the next five years. It’s so far reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 33%, water consumption by 21% and solid waste-to-landfill by 21%. At press, Clorox was just short of reducing energy consumption by 20%.

Kohler shares that Clorox will soon launch a more concentrated bleach so it can pack more solution in less packaging (which means more products in trucks, and fewer on the road). And in May, it joined the TerraCycle/Loop circular program to move closer to its reusable packaging goals.

“We have had a lot of discussions [with consumers] about the balance of our chemicals, making sure that we have the right list of ingredients, making sure that we’re leaders and that we show transparency,” he says. “Historically, we



haven’t talked about what’s in our products, because it’s considered proprietary. But consumers have higher expectations now. So we became one of the first companies to disclose exactly what’s in our products [on our website].”

Kohler says those efforts have been “a nice way to dip our feet in the water” but that this is just the beginning. “The reality is, in order to get the kind of step-change that we need as a planet, we need to make less incremental and more disruptive changes in our supply chain.”

“[Sustainability] starts at the top,” he adds. “And marketing is one of the biggest stakeholders. Because marketing should be overseeing innovation, they should be working on new product launches, they should be working on the way a brand talks about its products.”

With that said, “sustainability is not a marketing idea. If you think it is, you’re greenwashing,” says Kohler. “It should be at the core of what you’re doing as a company.”

## Here’s to our favourite Canadian tire brand.

Congratulations Denise, on being named a Marketer of the Year.



**Denise Gohl-Eacrett**  
Director, Brand and  
Customer Experience  
Fountain Tire

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# FOUNTAIN TIRE'S DENISE GOHL- EACRETT TACKLES SHOPPER ANGST

How the marketer is shifting perceptions by making lives (and tire purchases) more comfortable and convenient.

BY CATHERINE PHILLIPS



**N**o one's idea of a fun shopping expedition involves a trip to the tire store to drop hundreds of dollars on a non-fun purchase.

Seven years ago Denise Gohl-Eacrett took on the challenge of changing that perception when she joined the Edmonton-based Fountain Tire chain.

Gohl-Eacrett tells *strategy* she was attracted to Fountain Tire for several reasons — but mostly for the opportunity to “stretch up and out” at a privately held company where everybody wears many hats and can lead different projects for its 160 nation-wide stores. Working alongside Fountain Tire's agency partners, the director of brand and customer experience has driven much-needed

change at the 63-year-old company with the addition of a digital consumer support group, which she says almost doubled in size over the last year.

“That was a big change, especially in terms of how we deliver the brand to our customer,” she says. Fountain Tire also switched up its agency partnerships, introducing new national and regional marketing agencies including creative AOR FCB Canada, digital experience partner Pound & Grain, PR firm Covalent and Trigger Communications.

The new slate of agencies was imperative to the brand's evolution, says Gohl-Eacrett.

“It was critical that we picked the right type of partners to work with us to push the envelope,” she recalls, adding that her

own role has seen a shift. “There's been a complete shift in the in-store experience and how we [create a more] digital experience rather than say, tire racks.”

Staying relevant in the digital age has been top-of-mind for the director, along with rebranding the company known best for its humorous spots and down-to-earth look — something she said began to shift in 2017 when it started working with FCB.

Prior to its new focus, Fountain Tire relied on price and promotion-based marketing that front-loaded humour in favour of strategy, she says. But, in order to differentiate, the company needed to lean into its customer-focused purpose that strives for “whatever makes their lives easier and whatever



makes their lives more comfortable.” So, it shifted its focus to campaigns that reiterate that mission of putting customers first — including ones in a younger demographic.

This meant moving away from its longtime brand mascot — a.k.a “The Goodyear Guy” played by actor Thom Sharp and one of the longest-running spokespersons — to develop a platform based on customer research and feedback. While Fountain Tire’s previous creative may have included saving a customer stranded on a desert island, or Sharp promoting Fountain Tire deals while in the middle seat of a long-haul flight, today’s ads focus more on the brand’s ability to be “on the road” with its customers.

Gohl-Eacrett acknowledges tires and automotive parts are tough categories to win hearts. “Tires are a grudge purchase. And so getting customers to be proactive — even if it’s paramount to their safety — can be a challenge,” she says, adding that Fountain Tire moved towards a brand purpose with deeper roots within the community.

“We went through consumer research, looked at data trends and our position from a customer’s perspective, we [conducted] stakeholder interviews, we talked to our customers to understand their needs and motivations were when it came to tire or auto-related decisions, and we consulted with our store owners and managers.”

As a result, the brand repositioned its conversations with stakeholders to reflect their shared interests, launching the “We’re On This Road Together” platform in 2018. Ads showed the type of trusted relationship Fountain Tire can provide customers, and resulted in an unaided awareness increase of 18%, while sales grew 12.5%.

The masterbrand platform debuted a few months after the award-winning “Safest Highway” campaign, which was the company’s first effort to shift perceptions around Fountain Tire (and tires in general). It addressed the fact that worn tires account for 26.2% of accidents in poor driving conditions, and brought attention to the importance of vehicle safety and maintenance. Working with FCB, the team used 3D-image mapping to gauge the quality of vehicle tires as they drove into a gas station along Alberta’s most dangerous

highway. Tires that missed the mark were replaced, on the spot, by the retailer.

A year later, the “Truck-Thru” campaign launched to address another concern (downtime) for its commercial customer. “The majority of our business is commercial, and one of the things that we wanted to do was make sure our brand comes to life for [those] customers,” she says. The inspiration for the “Truck-Thru” campaign was the insight that downtime costs the commercial trucking industry \$35 billion a year.

“We wanted to tackle that by approaching one of Canada’s busiest trucking routes and amplify that activation with a very small, but really targeted media strategy.”

Fountain Tire zeroed in on the cost of

**Below:** Fountain Tire’s marketing under Gohl-Eacrett has combined its trademark humour with customer support, be it with a road-side cafe, in the stands at Oilers’ games or as a car is spinning out.



downtime with a 20-foot drive-thru kiosk specifically designed for oversized vehicles, offering free coffee and snacks. The stunt was promoted directly to truckers through highway ads, pamphlets at rest-stops and announcements on CB radio.

The campaign helped increase commercial sales by \$4.6 million.

According to Gohl-Eacrett, the brand captured a weeks-worth of data on the speed that trucks moved through the truck-thru, and helped decrease the cost of downtime from \$760 to \$40 per vehicle. The activation has since been requested by trucking companies across the country.

Another home-run for the company was its “Fanbods” campaign, which highlighted its Canadian pride with a focus on NHL hockey team, the Edmonton Oilers.

The campaign featured Fountain Tire employees being good sports by “donating their bodies” to Oilers fans and painting a letter of the alphabet on each of their bodies so that fans didn’t have to go through the trouble — and the soap. The ad included a microsite that allowed fans to create “Fan Bod” cheers, which were then turned into GIFs that could be shared on social media. Fans were also offered a free oil change.

According to Gohl-Eacrett, the campaign evolved beyond the Edmonton Oilers and became a North American-wide platform for the NHL, with the interface being used by fans from 24 of its 31 NHL teams in seven out of 10 Canadian provinces and 13 states in the U.S.

As for the future, the company is gearing up for the launch of its second Western Hockey League (WHL) and Ontario Hockey League (OHL) sponsorship. Although minor in comparison to its sponsorship of the Oilers, the company chose the leagues so it could better align with smaller markets, says Gohl-Eacrett.

“We’re also bringing in the component of the partnerships and this really localized approach called the ‘Three Stars,’” which honours volunteerism in Canadian communities. It’s a campaign that speaks to Gohl-Eacrett’s vision for a customer-focused, partnership-driven look — and one that signals a smooth course into the future of the brand.

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**Clockwise from top left:** Danone went from a small factory in 1919 to a \$40 billion global enterprise in 2019; Danone acquired WhiteWave in 2017, adding plant-based food to its portfolio; 100% natural yogurt is one of Danone's "revolutionary" innovations.



# DANONE'S PURPOSE-DRIVEN ETHOS

BY CHRIS LOMBARDO

AS DANONE CELEBRATES A CENTURY IN WHAT HAS BECOME A VERY COMPETITIVE CATEGORY, THE COMPANY IS ONCE AGAIN REINVENTING THE FORMULA.

Isaac Carasso began peddling his milk and yeast product (or yogurt, as we know it today) as a digestive aid in pharmacies in Barcelona more than a century ago. He established a small factory 100 years ago in 1919 and by 1929, his modest business – named Danone after his young son Daniel – had expanded from Spain to France. He sold his yogurt in small ceramic jars in Paris, a city more consumed by cinema and nascent surrealism than by Balkan desserts.

Meanwhile, in 1928, Quebec-born Jude Delisle had

discovered yogurt during a trip to Paris. Upon his return home, Delisle began playing with lactic ferments and produced small batches of his own yogurt in a makeshift shop on Montreal's Rue Duluth. Production scaled from 20 to 4,000 jars per day, out of which the company, Delisle Foods, was born. Much later in 1993, The Danone Group purchased Delisle, rebranding the yogurt business to become Danone Canada in 1997.

Dan Magliocco, president and CEO at Danone Canada says that when the company came to Canada it had the muscle of a global organization and was beginning to accelerate the growth of what are now household names, Activia and Oikos. The company is now a \$40 billion dollar global juggernaut. Its portfolio also includes DanActive, Danino, Danette, YoCrunch, Silk and So Delicious.

In Canada, Danone operates from two headquarters, one in Boucherville, Quebec, and another in Mississauga, Ont., with a marketing department made up of almost 30 people. The company's domestic competitors include General Mills' Liberté and Yoplait, and Parmalat's Astro and Soggi. According to Nielsen, Danone Canada holds a 37% share in yogurt, a 50% share in plant-based beverages, and a 71% share in coffee creamers.

## THE YOGURT BOOM

Danone's first advertising slogan was "the right dessert for happy healthy digestion." The challenge in building the category during those early days, says Magliocco, was getting consumers on board with eating yogurt throughout the day instead of simply for dessert, as well as adapting the naturally sour flavour to meet a North American palate. The latter was something Carasso's

son was able to accomplish from his home base of New York City in the 1940s, when his company added fruit to the bottom, and therefore sweetness.

The treat's popularity really took off in the '60s, and the product – frequently associated as a food for toddlers – became an on-the-go snack for any occasion and any consumer. The benefits from its bacterial culture were marketed first as "probiotics" and later as ingredients that facilitate "general gut health."

Today, with consumer health trends skewing towards



more natural foods, the company is hoping its “free from” yogurt grows to become the new probiotics.

In February, Danone launched its first flavoured yogurt made with wholly natural ingredients and no added sugar or artificial sweeteners. According to Magliocco, the 100% natural variety is a “manifestation of what we believe the future of food should be, relying on what nature gave us – milk, ferment and fruit and no added sugar.” He adds that the brand is educating the consumer around the product taste (which is, naturally, not as sweet as other yogurts) via a campaign dubbed “Revolution.” Created by Taxi with media led by Wavemaker, advertising highlights the ingredients and cheekily compares the new product to technological innovations like the moon landing and the lightbulb.

For Danino, a drinkable yogurt aimed at kids, Magliocco says the brand also “took a bold step to change the game, taking the sugar down by 40%.” Adapting to consumer trends involves “constant vigilance around anticipating the needs of the consumer and bringing unique products to the table to build categories versus stealing share,” he says.

One of those category leaders is Activia, introduced in 1987 by Danone and now available on five continents.

Jeremy Oxley, VP of marketing, insights and strategy at Danone Canada, says Activia’s popularity springs from the company staying true to its probiotic roots and health benefits. The brand was one of the first to educate consumers on what probiotics were, says Oxley. “Now the shift is talking about overall gut health in their day-to-day life, moving up the ladder to show what functional benefits are actually being delivered.”

## THE NEXT WAVE

When the brand first entered the market, there were only a handful of players competing in the yogurt space.

But today the company is more than just yogurt.

In 2017, Danone bought WhiteWave in a deal worth more than US\$10 billion. The “purpose-driven” company is focused on plant-based foods and beverages, organic produce, wholesome dairy products and coffee creamers. The acquisition brought the likes of Silk plant-

based foods and beverages, Earthbound Farm organic produce, as well as So Delicious nut milk and yogurt into Danone’s fold. Today, its brands produce more than 300 dairy and plant-based products in Canada.

It was a pivotal moment for a company that recognized the earth had shifted under its feet, Magliocco says. Danone had witnessed a growing trend of small, nimble competitors entering the category, so the company upped its innovation game, developing products and quickly bringing them to market, says Oxley.

He says the plant-based beverage category grew from soy milk and quickly merged into almond. Today, cashew, coconut and oat continue to drive innovation. Oxley says the category is growing steadily, with the

Silk brand, for example, having penetrated 15% of households in 2011. Now, it’s closer to 40%.

While Magliocco touts the “outstanding” taste of Silk and So Delicious, he concedes that it wasn’t always that way. Products in the plant-based beverage space have come a “long way in terms of quality and taste, even for us.”

There’s still a lot of opportunity for growth when it comes to plant-based yogurt and “lots of innovation will come from that,” he says, with Oxley adding that convenience-driven drinkable yogurt and products with high protein (like its new YoPro product

from Australia) are also growth areas for Danone. In addition, the company is experimenting with different flavours and formats, such as adding mango and ginger to an Activia lactose-free probiotic drink. The day Danone stops bringing innovation to the table, says Oxley, is the day it becomes susceptible to “lowest price wins.”

The company is also innovating in the CSR sphere. Its purpose stems from decisions that “take the long-term interests of future generations into consideration,” with respect to the impact of food on consumers’ health, their communities and the environment. For example, Danone Canada is a founding sponsor of Breakfast Club of Canada, and the brand has donated more than 20 million servings of yogurt to support the non-profit and help children start their day with a balanced breakfast.

In 2018, Danone Canada achieved B Corp certification, a couple of years ahead of schedule. It is among 3,000

**Right:** In a new Taxi-created spot for Danone’s zero-sugar, all-natural yogurt is surprising consumers young and old; the So Delicious dairy free ice-cream allows the company to adapt to health-focused consumer trends.

**Far Right:** Danone also entered the cold-brew coffee category with Stok, a line of ready-to-drink iced coffees.



registered organizations that are legally required to balance purpose with profit, and is one of only a few CPG companies that sit on the list (alongside Ben & Jerry's).

The company has committed to making all of its packaging reusable, compostable or recyclable by the year 2025. And according to its B Corp assessment, women and/or individuals from underrepresented populations comprise of 50% of management positions. Also, 100% of management had a formal written performance evaluation in the last year that included social and environmental goals, with CEO compensation directly tied to achieving social or environmental metrics.

The company is also showing a commitment to local Canadian farms, having partnered with a small co-op in Northern Quebec to source milk from farmers. "It becomes an element of trust for consumers as it allows us to work with farmers to build sustainable agriculture," he says, adding that brand trust has become more important for the next wave of consumers and that they are "looking behind the wall of the trademark to pressure-test us."

It's these purpose-driven commitments that helped woo Magliocco to the company as a "Danoner" in 2017.


"One of the reasons I came [to Danone] was the purpose-driven aspect. It's hard to find FMG companies that have a focus on economic and social impact."

In the past 50 years, he says the brand has had three global CEOs and they "have all been purpose-oriented, [that's] where our mission of bringing health through food comes from."



In 1972, then-CEO Antoine Riboud remarked to French industry leaders that "corporate responsibility doesn't end at the factory gate or the company door." His son Franck, who later took over the business, set up the Danone Ecosystem Fund in 2009, which supports the creation of businesses such as micro-enterprises for food distribution. Today, Danone's global CEO Emmanuel Faber has established nine strategies anchored to UN Sustainable Development Goals, including a commitment to inspire healthier eating, as well as eco initiatives, from

regenerative agriculture to circular packaging.

Magliocco says most company boards are obsessed with quarterly results, but at Danone, its sustainability commitment has not wavered. When it comes to the company's ethos, "we don't talk about it enough, but it is a source of pride and encouragement for the future." 

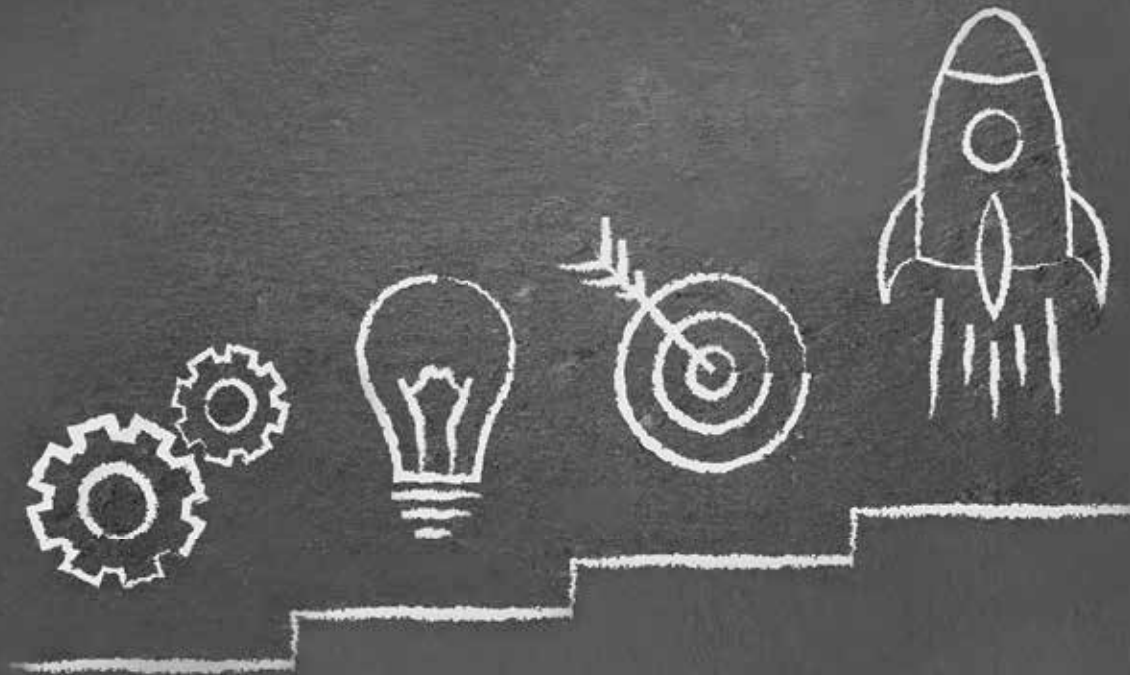
Danone, congratulations on



years of looking forward.

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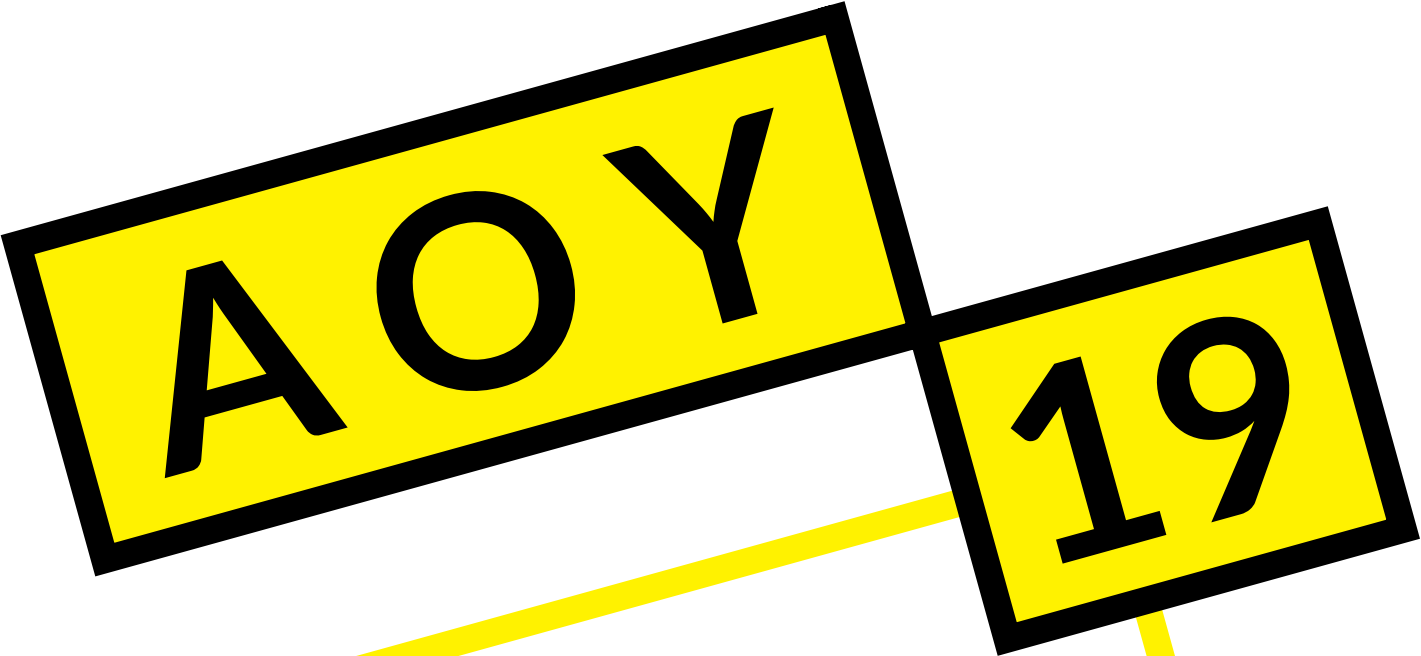
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AOY

19

# AGENCY OF THE YEAR

**WE PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE GIVEN RETHINK A CHAIR** on the stage this year. (It's been done before, honest.) The agency stole the show this year with a three-peat win: one Gold in Agency, another Gold in Design, and a Silver in Digital.

Even though the shop's founding trio have stepped back from the team, Rethink is still on a roll. Sound succession planning is their secret, and time will tell how far it takes them.

FCB is also soaring higher than the rest. It's on year #4 of Digital Gold wins. The momentum continues as the agency finds strength and success in its data and CRM sister shop FCB/Six.

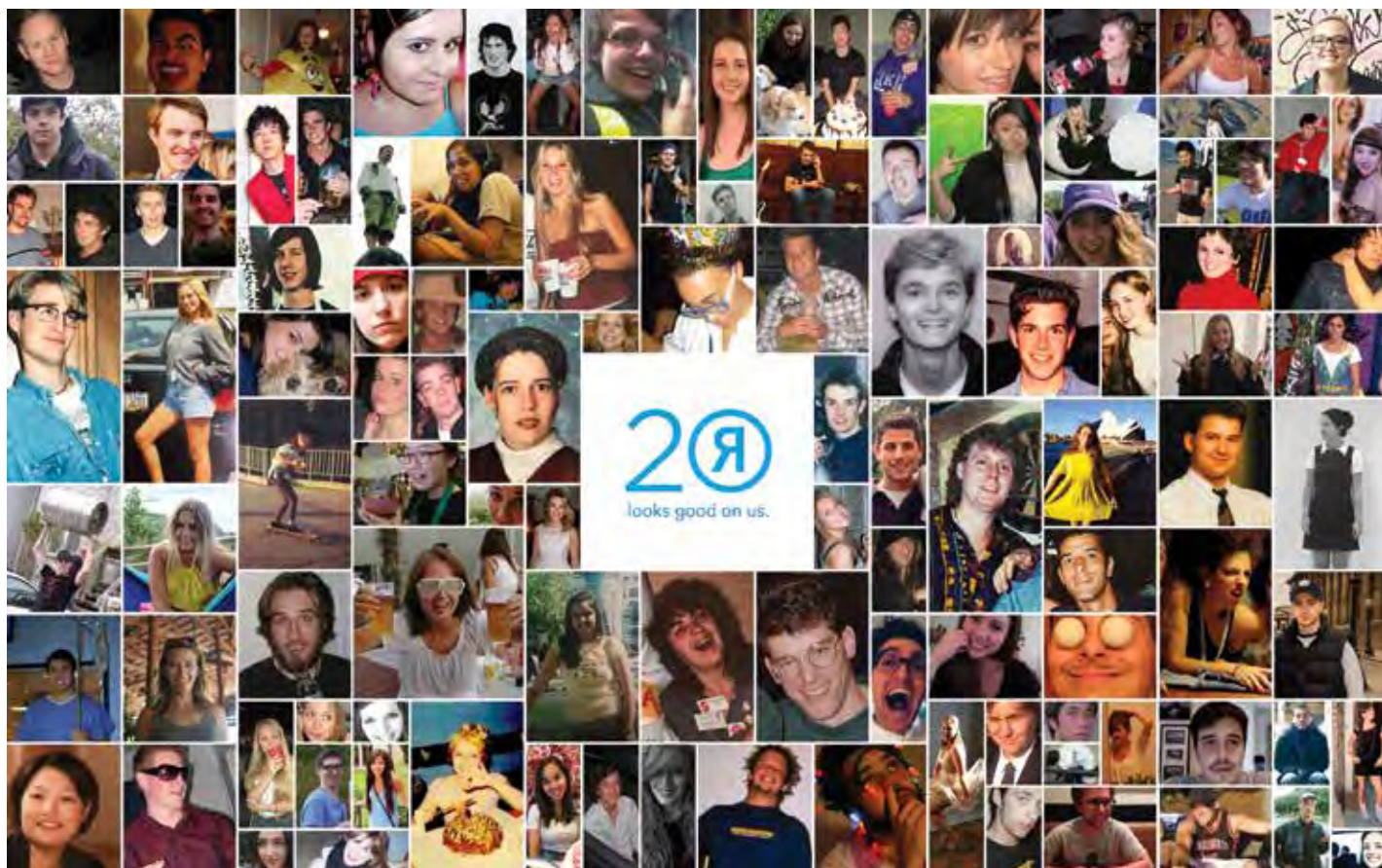
As for the inaugural Small AOY Gold, that one goes to Target. The 40-year-old (in 2020!) agency from the edges of Canada's

easternmost province is keeping it small to stay steady. And its success continues to be seen in regional show streaks.

Media winner Initiative takes home the top prize as it builds bigger, better relationships with media companies.

And Narrative steps up to the PR Gold plate after winning a Silver last year. It stands out these days by showing no fear in the face of controversial campaigns.

The shops were judged on their work (see the criteria on p.70) by jury members from brands and agencies (see p. 68-69), but these articles on the 16 winners go beyond the campaigns, also focusing on the strategy behind their structures, with a look at the work that won.



# Rethink rethinks its future

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

**IT'S ONE THING TO CLAIM YOU'RE** "fearlessly independent." It's another to scorn potential suitors by "shorting" their stocks as if you're Ryan Gosling in *The Big Short*.

But that's exactly what Rethink did at last year's AOY gala, creating a video that declared its independence by burning bridges with every major holding co.

It was a bold move considering the Vancouver-born shop is contemplating a future in which Tom Shepansky, Chris Staples and Ian Grais – the creative minds that kickstarted the adventure in 1999 – are no longer at the helm. But even the most successful ventures must eventually come to grips with succession, says Shepansky.

"Twenty years later, we're more convinced than ever that being independent and having control of our destiny is powerful," he says. "As founders, it would be easier for us to take a cheque and run. But easier is not better."

Instead of selling out and getting out, Shepansky says Rethink plans on "rethinking succession and transition in a whole different way."

The company is coming off a stellar year (which also happens to be its 20th), having climbed to the top of the AOY podium as this year's Gold Agency, Gold Design and Silver Digital winner. Though it doesn't report financials, Shepansky says the company has experienced "phenomenal growth" in both headcount and revenue over the last two years. And it plans to continue on that trajectory, having achieved growth in 17 of its 20 years.

Over the last year, Rethink picked up a number of major wins. As the new AOR for Truss Beverage Co. – a joint venture between Molson Coors and cannabis producer Hexo – it has been given the reins of an entire portfolio of soon-to-be available cannabis-infused

## NEW KEY BUSINESS

Truss Beverage Co., Nestle, The Keg, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Lobo Genetics, Heinz Ketchup (and Heinz Mayo), Hexo, Humane Canada, Greenpeace, BCAA, London Drugs, BC Hydro, Arc'teryx, Foundry BC, Credit Counselling Society, Qtrade Virtual Wealth, St. Pauls Hospital Foundation, Monstercat Darwin, Matchstick, Automobile en Direct, Goodfood, OnDeck, Brasseur de Montréal, Molson Ultra

## KEY HIRES

In 2019, the agency hired 29 people across its three offices in Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto.

## STAFF

178

beverages. The Keg steakhouse and Heinz Ketchup's Canadian business have also come knocking, as has Ontario's Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. That's on top of a major win with WestJet last year. Meanwhile, it continues to lead campaigns for A&W, which has been with Rethink since its second month as an agency.

If the shop is at the top of its game, it's because its steadfast independence and people-first culture allows it to excel, say its partners, repeating their agency's mantra of "people, product and profit, and in that order."

"When you have people who go home at reasonable hours and aren't killing themselves until 2 a.m. to satisfy a New York holding company, they're happier. They can think better, they're not tired and they can do the best work of their careers," says Aaron Starkman, managing partner, creative in Toronto. "I'm doing the best work

of my career since I've been at Rethink, and I've been working the least."

"No two projects are the same for us," adds Morgan Tierney, managing partner in Vancouver, a city in which Rethink claims to have the largest creative team. "We are as creative with our process as we are with our output."

A string of hires across departments brought the Vancouver office's headcount to an all-time high of 89 employees in August, on the heels of new AOR assignments with BC Hydro, London Drugs and the University of British Columbia's Sauder School of Business. There was a time when Shepansky believed the office would tap out at 40 employees.

Later in August, seven new faces arrived at Rethink's Montreal office to support an expanded mandate with Molson Coors that covers the Molson Ultra brand, as

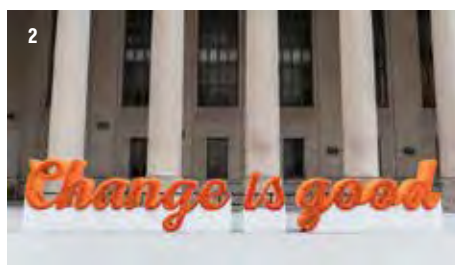
## AOY CASES



### 1. Flight connections

Having just launched its 787 Dreamliner, officially entering the global flight path, WestJet needed a way to resonate with world-trotting business travellers and their

families. So Rethink created the "WestJet Flight Light." Using real-time flight data, the WiFi-enabled light projects the path of a parent coming home from a business trip on their child's ceiling. The app also allows parents in flight to send messages and emojis to the child's flight light, building anticipation for the best part of any trip – coming home.



2. To announce A&W's banning of plastic straws, Rethink created a 35-foot installation made of thousands of its last plastic straws, ensuring they stay out of the oceans.



3. For IKEA, the agency recycled an old commercial ("Lamp") to showcase the retailer's renewed commitment to sustainability.



4. To promote concussion awareness for the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, the agency drew on the typical grit of sports advertising in ads that urged athletes to not risk everything.

5. "Ka' Wine and Dine" is a Raptors Republic initiative that gave local restos and bars stickers to place in their shop windows. It promised top player Kawhi Leonard a lifetime of free eats in return for his re-signing with the Toronto Raptors in the off season.

► For full cases, go to [aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](https://aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



## DESIGN AOY CASES

### 1. Stop, drop and roll

To get cannabis business accelerator Leaf Forward in the news cycle and to commemorate the passing of Bill C-45 – which legalized recreational marijuana in Canada – Rethink turned the legal bill (and all of its wording) into rolling papers. A video kicked off the celebration on social media, and the miniature bill was shared with influencers in the cannabis movement.



2. To show there's more to Ottawa than meets the eye, Rethink created "Not Vanilla," a real ice-cream brand that embodies the vibrant city. Packaging was dull and boring on the outside, the way many (perhaps wrongly) view Ottawa. Once opened, the boxes revealed colourful creative highlighting the city's culture and attractions.



3. To rebrand WestJet, Rethink created a new colour palette. It consisted of teal, which was used as a dominant hue in communications that targeted leisure travellers; and blue, the colour of power and confidence, and which was used to highlight the brand's premium business offerings.

► For full cases, go to [designwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](https://designwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)

well as new business with Automobile en Direct, Rouge FM and other clients. The Montreal team has grown from four to around 25 staff in less than five years, says Nicolas Quintal, managing partner. It remains nevertheless in start-up mode, pitching against the "big guys" (Lg2, Cossette, Sid Lee) and holding its own in the local market, while supporting national clients with needs in Quebec, he says.

"Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver have next gen leadership teams and a managing partner structure running things," Shepansky says of the 10-person group consisting of Morgan Tierney, Leia Rogers, Glen Chalcraft and Darren Yada in Vancouver; Caleb Goodman, Sean McDonald, Christina Yu and Aaron Starkman in Toronto; as well as Alex Lefebvre and Nicolas Quintal in Montreal.

"They're attracting business, they're retaining business, they're doing good work. It's a testament to the next-generation teams." Meanwhile, all three founders are "coaching and moving into more of a mentorship and governance role."

Last year, Rethink sought to address one of the final hurdles of independence: clients whose needs extend beyond Canada. In March, it joined ICOM, a global network of more than 80 indie advertising and marketing communications agencies.

Through ICOM, shops can develop and execute campaigns with international partners, or tap them for local insights or other needs. B2B marketing agency Quarry, from St. Jacobs, Ontario, is the only other Canadian shop in the network, which operates under an

exclusive engagement model.

"Being a member of ICOM helps level the playing field with agencies that have global networks at their disposal," Tierney says. "We can pick up the phone and call someone in [almost] any country in the world and verify an insight."

Though Rethink joined ICOM in response to the global needs of a specific client – later revealed to be WestJet, which promptly named Rethink its new lead strategic and creative agency – the partnership does not represent a "big chunk" of the business, Shepansky says. The move was designed to "shore up a weakness [of being] an independent as opposed to being this huge strength."

ICOM could even prove useful in helping Rethink navigate the challenges of succession. In addition to having recently begun consulting with Deloitte on a possible structure and governance model, Shepansky says he has spoken to an ICOM member in the U.S. about its experience with succession planning. In turn, others within the network have asked Rethink about its own plans for the future.

"Many years ago, Dan Wieden thought about a succession plan. And very similar to us, it was all about just being true to the mission of the agency and sticking to it," Starkman says. "He's really backed away in recent years, and [Wieden+Kennedy] has never done better, from a creativity and business standpoint. For us, it's very similar. We just have to focus on what makes Rethink Rethink, and the rest will take care of itself."

There's no perfect succession playbook, notes Tierney, who started as an intern with the agency eight years ago (along with Leia Rogers, also a managing partner in Vancouver).

"There aren't many independent agencies that have tried to pull off what we're doing right now, so Chris, Ian and Tom have done a ton of listening and learning and consulting," she says. "As the person who is on the other side of the handoff, the amazing thing that I've learned is that succession really isn't just about handing over the keys and walking away. It's about passing on your values."

Rethink has always tried to hold the creative bar high, and after 20 years, the agency is proud of the work it has done, Shepansky says. "The challenge now is how do you keep it going? I can promise you selling to a multinational isn't the way to keep it going... I've been in the room! I know what it feels like. And we want to rethink that."

## DIGITAL AOY CASES



### 1. Shame on wasteful QSRs

Rethink tackled the crisis of single-use plastics and their effect on oceans and marine life with a Greenpeace campaign that featured unsettling images of a turtle, fish and seagull choking on plastic straws. It then turned those images into Instagram stickers for people to tag QSRs that still use straws in drinks, and then shame/share them for all the world to see.

2. A&W is known for its beefy burger family, but it needed to build excitement for a new veggie patty. Rethink tapped vegan influencers to establish cred among the plant-based community, with social content building plenty buzz for the QSR's Beyond Meat meal.



3. For IKEA, the agency cast the retailer's spokesman as a champion of sleep. It targeted late-night owls who were watching videos using contextual pre-roll, with ad copy customized down to the content of the video.

► For full cases, go to [digitalaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](https://digitalaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



## BBDO dissects creativity

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

**THE SPOT BEGINS LIKE ANY OTHER** back-to-school commercial, with grateful children talking about their slick new “essentials.” It lands like a gut punch when we learn their school supplies will not be used in class or for homework, but to escape an active shooter.

BBDO New York produced the chilling PSA for Sandy Hook Promise, a U.S. non-profit, as children were returning back to school in September, reminding their parents of the dangers posed by gun violence.

Later, the spot became fodder for the minds at BBDO Toronto, where it was shared among creatives and strategists during a recent meeting of the “factory.”

Every two weeks, agency staffers meet to dissect the strategy and cultural insights behind powerful creative, often for an hour or more. Strategists, account managers and technologists have attended these meetings, though they are mostly intended for the creative department, says BBDO Toronto’s Denise Rossetto, who runs the sessions alongside co-CCO Todd Mackie. “We normally get 20 to 25 passionate people. We eat a lot of Doritos.”

The Sandy Hook Promise spot happened to come from within the BBDO network, but work discussed at the meetings can come from any agency around the world. The team reviews the work, deciding what they love and what they hate as they interrogate the power of certain creative campaigns, she says.

Rossetto and Mackie, who joined BBDO as ECDs in 2015, began hosting the gatherings two years ago. They serve as an opportunity to have “really healthy debates,” says Mackie. “Half the department might hate it, and they’ll tell us why. The other half thinks it’s brilliant [and] that it’s going to get Cannes Lions.”

According to the CCOs, inspiration is the lifeblood of a creative agency. It’s what separates the cold shops from the hot ones in an industry where success can feel like a rollercoaster ride, adds CEO Dom Caruso.

The existence of the “factory” is proof of the philosophical influence BBDO New York has had on the Toronto-based creative shop. According to Rossetto, BBDO global chief creative officer David Lubars puts



## KEY NEW BUSINESS

Keilhauer, Metrolinx, Organigram, Canadian Red Cross, Ontario Lung Association, RBC Rewards, Rogers Ignite TV, Hudson's Bay Company, Fuzz Wax Bar, Ford, Baycrest

## KEY HIRES

Ryan Lawrence, ACD; Michael Carey, Matt Doran, CWS; Danielle Zablockie, Cameron Hopkins, ADs; Aaron Arellano, Colin Kikcio, senior planners; Stacey Horricks, senior content planner; Alexandra Jo Heller, planner; Justin Seegobin, VP, group account director; Danielle Lew, account executive

STAFF  
139

it this way: never let the cement dry and maintain the ethos of a “boutique network.”

As a relatively small market, Canada is particularly susceptible to the whims of globalization, says Caruso, with clients slashing the number of markets in which they do original work. “For any network agency [in Canada], the amount of business that you have with a global account is trending down, not trending up,” he says. “That means, for us, we need to compete and win here with Canadian-based clients.”

BBDO recently attracted local clients, such as Metrolinx and non-profit Right to Play, for which it created the award-winning “We Rise” campaign. It’s also now doing work for Organigram, Hudson’s Bay (which hasn’t worked with an external agency for some time) and Baycrest Foundation in Toronto, which “wants to be the SickKids of dementia,” according to Caruso.

Caruso adds that recent work for the Regent Park School of Music (RPSM) shows how the agency uses creativity to think about a business outcome – like raising funds for at-risk youth – in a new way.

For RSPM, the shop innovated the charitable fundraising model by working with students to record *Parkscapes*, an 11-song album of compositions and samples, which generates licensing fees and royalties every time one of its tracks is sampled in a song that’s sold or played on the radio. After being shown the work by producer DJ Frank Dukes, Taylor Swift included samples from *Parkscapes* in her album *Lover*, extending the fundraising efforts well beyond the campaign.

“It’s basically driving the behaviour that we want in the end, which is to make money,” Caruso says. “It’s not hifalutin stuff, but it has helped build the brand along the way.”

## CASES



### 1. Borrowed interest

M&M's needed a new tagline for a new chocolate bar, so BBDO stole one. The brand's original “Melts in your mouth, not in your hand” didn't make sense when it launched the M&M's Chocolate Bars. So the shop took KFC's “Finger Lickin' Good” tag and posted a tweet about the melt-in-your-hands product. When the colonel got involved, the two brands playfully hashed it out over Twitter and ultimately decided the iconic “Finger Lickin' Good” tagline was better kept with the chicken chain.



2. To shine a light on Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, the agency partnered with the Ontario Lung Association to create “UnFun Balloons” so people could test for the condition in the comfort of their home.

3. In today's streaming era, BBDO created a campaign that convinced people to upgrade to Rogers Ignite TV, using the star power of celebs and repositioning the cable box as an all-in-one content box.

4. For GO Transit, the shop aimed to convert city drivers by promoting the bus as an autonomous car, playing up the R&R benefits of self-driving vehicles, like reading rather than stressing over traffic.

5. A campaign for Right to Play showed how youth in war-stricken and impoverished countries can reclaim their childhood through sport and play.



► For full cases, go to [aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# John St. is an AOY winner

BY JENNIFER HORN

**THE ONSLAUGHT BEGAN AT 4:58PM** on Sept. 22, 2019. It was a Sunday. A Loblaw employee – his name is Dave – signed into No Name’s Twitter account and he/the brand proclaimed, “I will now live-tweet the emmys.”

At 5:01pm: “turning on the TV now.”

At 5:08pm: “nothing is happening yet.”

Finally, at 5:33pm: “a director just won an award.”

Later at 7:43pm: “more presenters are presenting.”

The curtain was drawn at 8:02pm: “my live-tweeting has concluded.”

No Name’s three-hour tweetathon got a social media ovation from thousands of Canadians that evening. The brand’s Twitter handler has carte blanche to post what he pleases beyond that *Emmys* play-by-play. The sardonic and sarcastic tweets about anything from No Name canned peas to canned milk have given life to the brand that was – since its genesis in 1978 – purposely advertised as *not* having a voice.

“It was always the anti-brand,” says Stephanie Hurst, president at John St., the agency that codified the new No Name tone so that company employees like Dave can be given Twitter autonomy.

Because that’s what John St. does. It takes brands – some of which are going through an identity crisis – and makes them “unignorable” by finding what’s in their DNA and translating that into purpose, says Megan Towers, the agency’s CSO. Beyond that, the agency creates visual design systems that are clear enough for a brand’s “employees to understand where they’re going and why they’ve pivoted,” says CCO Angus Tucker.

It did that for Home Hardware with “Here’s How”; No Frills with “Haulers”; President’s Choice with “Eat Together”; and now, it’s looking to unearth a communications ecosystem for new client KFC Canada. When the QSR gave the agency the \$7 million business in July, CMO Samantha Redman told *strategy* it was sold by

## KEY NEW BUSINESS

Loblaws, Campari, Aphria, e-Sight, QHR Technologies, Tory's LLP, George Weston, Dairy Farmers of Canada

## KEY HIRES

Cam Boyd, CD; Oliver Brooks, Mike Richardson, Natalie Mathers, ACDs; Justin Close, associate design director, digital; Jenni Cowdy, team leader; Lorri MacDonald, client service director

John St.'s track record "in transforming big retail brands from top to bottom."

"Five years ago, we would have just looked at how brands creatively express themselves [in a campaign]," says Hurst. "Whereas now we're working on the foundational elements of a brand. So for PC Optimum, for instance, we were able to design the entire brand identity, look and feel, tone of voice and the work."

Tucker likes to credit Mooren (Mo) Bofill for pulling the curtain from John St.'s eyes back in 2015 when the executive director of design first arrived at the Toronto shop. Tucker says she "instantly and dramatically changed the way we thought of ourselves internally... She saw very quickly how design thinking could be applied across everything. And we started to look at brands from a much broader and holistic perspective. That's when a lot of brands came out of the woodwork and said, 'OK, what you did for that brand – can you do that for us?'"

Many of those clients (retail especially) are facing market pressures to act fast and furious, says Towers. This has led the agency to "disrupt our processes to be able to get to a brand's foundations quickly but without compromising the thinking and rigor [that's required]," she says.

Hurst explains that it recently began testing a "minimal viable brand" or "MVB" process – lifted from the tech world's "minimal viable product" – in which decision-making is accelerated by having clients commit to a much higher degree of involvement. For instance, the VP of marketing must dedicate every Friday to John St., while the strategist who usually presents already-developed thinking becomes a workshop facilitator so that everyone, from client to creative, contributes. It's not for everyone, says Hurst, but so far a cannabis brand, a tech startup, and Loblaw have worked with the agency this way (the latter for the launch of its PC Optimum and PC Express products).

While these quick-fire collabs may be necessary for John St. to deliver work on a dime, Tucker says that won't lead the agency to fall into the short-termism trap. "We, [creative agencies], are exceptionally good at making corporations more human," he says, imploring advertisers to stop thinking of themselves as "content creators."

"We are brand thinkers who create content underneath overall thought. I think we need to do better, as an industry, in saying that, protecting that, and promoting that than we have over the last 20 years."

## CASES

### 1. Put down the phone. Pick up a fork.

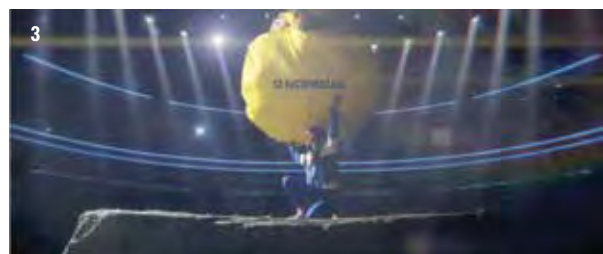
To support the President's Choice "Eat Together" campaign – which showed the power of food in bringing people together – John St. created the Eat Together Day, where the brand gathered friends and families, along with Loblaw banner employees, to dine at 2,500 stores nationwide. That same day, it launched the third #EatTogether film.

V



2. For Shoppers Drug Mart, the agency got tampons to women living on the street by putting them on the street. Across Toronto, it discretely placed hygiene products inside "The Monthly" newspaper boxes.

3. John St. created a No Frills "Haul or Nothing" spot and a retro video game that let customers compete to be crowned the ultimate "Hauler" and win PC Optimum points.



4. To compete against online holiday shopping for TJX, the shop introduced a game-changing retail innovation: "Offline Shopping." Creative dramatized features like human search engines, multi sensory feedback and instant add-to-cart technology.



5. To get people to enjoy Boston Pizza pizza at home, John St. used the little pizza saver (which looks like a tiny table) and added 3D-printed chairs to bring the idea of pizza and patios together.



► For full cases, go to [aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)





# Target stays on its mark

BY JOSH KOLM

**ANXIETY LEVELS IN THE CORNER OFFICES** of holding co.'s have been soaring ever since Marc Pritchard announced in 2017 that P&G would cut \$2 billion in ad spending over the next five years – a reality check of the budgetary pressures among the industry's biggest spenders.

But in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Noel O'Dea, president and co-founder of Target Marketing, isn't breaking a sweat, which is only partially due to the laid-back Atlantic Canada attitude. That's because Target has been able to weather industry turmoil – and become the inaugural Gold Small Agency of the Year – as a result of sticking to the core of its offering.

Target is likely best known for its award-winning campaigns for Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism, which have stated that the province "isn't Disneyland" and doesn't try to be. Some tourists want the polish of an iconic theme park, but others aren't interested in manufactured landscapes and experiences.

O'Dea also sees this as a metaphor for Target, which sticks to what it is good at instead of trying to replicate what big agencies or the ever-dreaded consultancies are trying to build.

In fact, Target has always worked at the intersection of strategy and creative, as well as taken an integrated approach that includes having media and, in more recent years, digital staffers sit side-by-side with the creative team. Target's smaller size and more distant location also gives it an outsider's point of view and a "human" creative approach that doesn't "chase the new bling," O'Dea says.

"The big consultancies study the best practices in an industry and lay out steps a company needs to take," he says. "That works really well in certain scenarios, but best practices don't give you any differentiation. There's a crushing sameness in the approach to solving problems, getting more share and differentiating brands.

**NEW BUSINESS**  
Whitecap,  
Government of  
Canada - Department  
for Women and  
Gender Equality,  
Crime Stoppers,  
City of Mount Pearl,  
BOMA, GoWestern,  
Immigration,  
Refugees and  
Citizenship Canada

**NEW HIRES**  
Jason Hill, CD;  
Jessica Hill, group  
account director;  
Jordan Finlayson,  
CW; Laura Douglas,  
UX developer,  
Tania Martinez,  
Norita Dhaigham,  
designers; Melissa  
Bassett, research  
coordinator

**STAFF**  
**33**

Maybe we're just odd, but there is a high correlation between odd and differentiation."

That differentiating focus on appealing to human desires, passions and concerns was seen in the aforementioned work promoting the agency's home province. It can also be seen in a campaign for Crime Stoppers to help increase the tips it receives. The campaign zeroes in on the unfounded – but real – doubts that many people have about the anonymity of tips.

While Target attracts local businesses and government ministries as clients (which is typical of smaller shops not based in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver), O'Dea says more than half of its revenue comes from brands outside of Newfoundland and Labrador. Those opportunities have given Target chances to grow, but O'Dea describes it as a "rude and distasteful experience."

"Whenever we got bigger than 50 people, none of the senior team could work directly with clients," he says, pointing out that clients look for direct access to

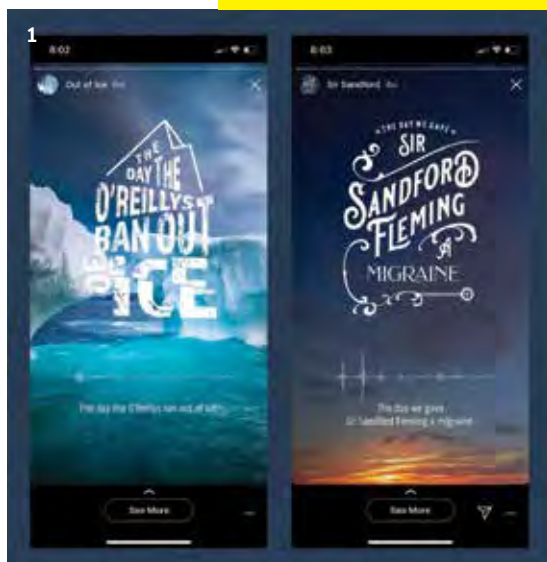
top agency thinkers, which larger shops aren't set up to provide. O'Dea can still be found as a strategist on the credits list for Target's campaigns, not too far under co-founder Tom Murphy, listed as creative director and art director. While Murphy retires this year, new CD Jason Hill will lead Target's creative department.

O'Dea is proud of the agency's ability to retain talent, with many having been with the agency for more than 15 years. When the shop needs to hire, O'Dea says it tends to look in places like the U.K., New Zealand and South Africa, where creatives have an outsider POV to complement its own and are more amicable to relocate to St. John's than talent from Toronto or the U.S.

"It's always a challenge to recruit the highest-priced people when we're going up against companies that can offer better or shinier options," O'Dea says. "But we seem to attract people who are not just smart, but also have a human grounding. And we'll never be successful in advertising if we talk to people as if they were robots – that was true 30 years ago, and might be truer now."

## CASES

### Small Agency Campaign of The Year

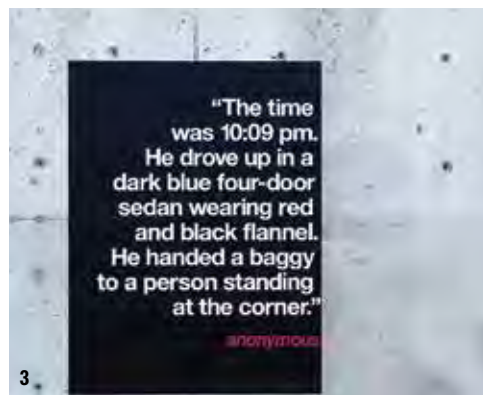


#### 1. Bringing stories to a screen near you

Through the "Storytelling" campaign, Target set out to attract new visitors to Newfoundland and Labrador. A content hub with over 60 original stories, a 90-second TV spot and a national newspaper campaign drove home the authentic and charming experience that can be found in this iconic location.

2. Famous for nothing, Mount Pearl became one of the most talked about towns in North America via a song on Spotify and iTunes. It wasn't long before the song's music video went viral and the charm and modesty of this little municipality made its way into people's hearts.

3. For Crime Stoppers, the agency created descriptive but anonymous posters and posted them in areas that experienced crime. The idea was to reassure tipsters that their identity is protected and that their tips do indeed remain anonymous.



► For full cases, go to [smallaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://smallaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# 123w pitches its best players

BY CHRIS LOMBARDO

## KEY NEW BUSINESS

Banff Lake Louise Tourism, BCLC, Centra Windows, Destination BC, Director's Guild of Canada, E-Comm 911, Lululemon, Michelin, Richmond Hospital Foundation, Save-On-Foods, Splash, St. George's University, Vancouver Airport Authority, Vancouver Public Library, Vitasave, Wealthbar, YWCA

## KEY HIRES

John Larigakis, Pierre Chan, CDs; Przemek Kotowski, account director

## STAFF 32

**SCOT KEITH IS CLEARLY FOND OF SPORTS ANALOGIES.** The founder and president/CEO at Vancouver's 123w is a big believer of his creative director-heavy approach to team-building, and he's comfortable pitting his "starting 5" (or even 10 – the bench is that deep, he says) against any other shop in the country: "We never pitch with an all-star team and then staff with juniors," the agency's website proclaims.

Keith tells *strategy* that 123w's business model is predicated on a "low overhead, high talent" ethos, one which was cultivated back in 2013 when this year's Silver-winning Small Agency of the Year launched in co-founder Jeff Harrison's garage and had only one client, Muskoka Brewery. Fast-forward to 2019 and 123W has picked up work for big name brands like Lululemon, Save-On-Foods and the Vancouver Airport Authority.

The "high talent" part of the "low overhead" equation means the agency is staffed by more senior members than a typical shop: 123w currently has 12 creative directors, almost a third of its team. That means these CDs wear many hats in the creative process.

What makes 123w's approach unique is that the CDs are involved in all aspects of the business, from developing the strategy to working directly with clients to doing the actual work. "We have a roll-up-your-sleeves culture," Keith says, adding that letting creatives tap into their impulses is a driver for the agency's success.

Because it's a small agency, Keith says 123w taps experience outside its walls, citing the redesign of Tim Hortons' eco-friendly coffee lids (which was one of its winning AOY cases, see sidebar) as a recent example of its

collaborative problem-solving approach.

Many people dislike the iconic, but poorly designed coffee cup lids. The challenge – two years in the making – was to design a lid that does not leak or injure customers' lip. And since Tims sells more than two billion cups of coffee per year, the task of reimagining its lid was seen by 123w as a way to get the QSR back in the good books of Canucks after several public spats with franchisees and new foreign ownership.

The lids re-launched in May 2019, one of the agency's first forays into product design. Partner Jeff Harrison came up with several designs, and the team sought help from an industrial designer in Hong Kong. He says this example highlights the fact that the agency did not need a full-time expert, but that it could create enough of the design elements in-house to bring the project to fruition.

"It's probably the most famous thing I've been part of, and it's a coffee lid," says Keith, joking that while there's no "Liddies" award, he's proud of the team's work.

The agency has hit a major run when it comes to







attracting talent over the last couple of years. The latest additions to 123w's CD team include John Larigakis and Pierre Chan, both of whom created Cannes Lions-winning campaigns while working at agencies DDB and Cossette. Mia Thomsett and Addie Gillespie, formerly of Dare and Camp Pacific, also joined the agency's CD ranks within the last two years.

Part of being good is having equal representation when it comes to the talent behind the work. "We're acutely aware that four white guys started this agency," Keith says of he and his co-founders Bryan Collins, Rob Sweetman (both formerly of Dare) and Jeff Harrison (formerly of Rethink). "And we're proud to have five female creative directors."

"I have a ton of respect for agencies that have been good for a really long time," Keith says, adding that it's hard to continue momentum regardless of an organization's size. Having 27 years in the biz, he believes it's possible to have spurts of success, but that true longevity comes from how an agency uses its talent.

## CASES

1



### 1. High driving is impaired driving

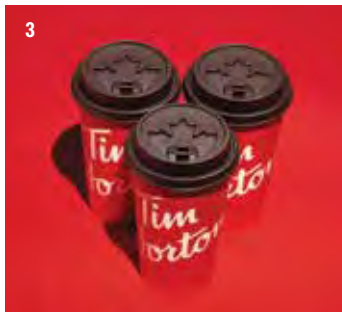
In the wake of pot legalization, 123w tackled "don't drive high" outreach for the BCAA. Research revealed that a high percentage of millennials had become designated drivers for their cannabis-partaking parents. To positively reinforce this responsible behaviour, the shop created a humorous campaign that flipped the script on the traditional parent-child relationship. Videos featured millennials in the driver's seat schooling their parents and making sure they get home safely after getting high.

2



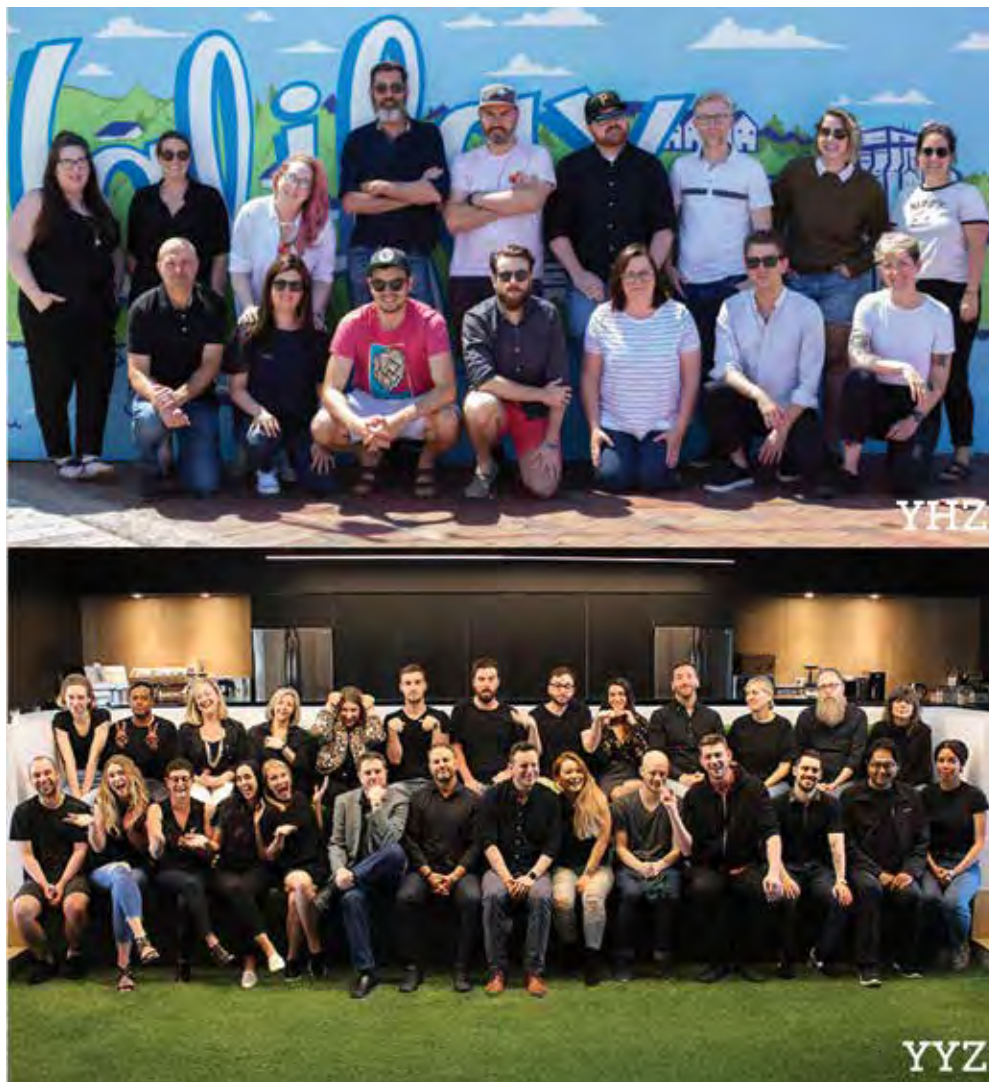
2. 123w created a movement to inspire pride and give Canadian content the respect it deserves. For the Canada Media Fund, the agency launched Made/Nous, a brand that represents Canadian content, with a website designed to showcase the Canadian contributions that have been made to productions.

3



3. To help Tim Hortons reduce its waste footprint and improve its coffee cup toppers, the agency designed leak guards that eliminated spills. The lids are also made of recyclable polypropylene so that less plastic goes into landfills.

► For full cases, go to [smallaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://smallaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# Arrivals + Departures takes off

BY CHRIS LOMBARDO

**THE NAME ARRIVALS + DEPARTURES SUGGESTS** the agency is going places. But even though Michael Bevacqua, partner and president of the shop, says he's proud of its accomplishments so far, "we are not exactly where we want to be." To help it get there, the agency is investing in start-ups and exploring the healthcare arena.

Independently owned Arrivals + Departures is the offspring of a 2016 union between Toronto's Blammo and Halifax's Extreme. Bevacqua says the agency's

founder Paul LeBlanc is a serial entrepreneur and his spirit has found its way into the shop's operations, with Arrivals + Departures recently taking equity in an early-seed natural cosmetics company. He says the investment allows the agency to "strategically and creatively influence [a brand] at the very ground floor... This is a model that interests us as a potential segment of our business where we can work closely with entrepreneurs."

The shop also added A+D Health to its slate of



## NEW KEY BUSINESS

AstraZeneca Canada Scholarship, Carl's Jr., Diabetes Canada, Ganong Bros., Halifax Stanfield International Airport, Heritage Gas, Mucho Burrito, NS College of Nurses, Ontario Brain Institute, Shannex, SkipTheDishes, SmartCentres, Tourism Prince Edward Island

## KEY HIRES

Jeff MacEachern, CCO; Rachel Vares, group account director; Daniel Bennett, James Rothenburg, senior ADs; Mel Hattie, digital content manager; Sacha Stephan, UX designer

## STAFF 46

offerings in 2018. The division is being helmed by VP Richelle Colbear, who joined the team after eight years at John St.'s healthcare division. Bevacqua says there is so much opportunity to push beyond what has so far been done in the health and wellness space, and the agency is currently working with AstraZeneca, Diabetes Canada and the Ontario Brain Institute.

A+D's two offices in Toronto and Halifax serve very different markets and clients.

"Combined, we're large enough that we have scale but small enough that we can be nimble and innovative," says Bevacqua, adding that both offices often share resources and play to each other's strength.

The Nova Scotia arm, for example, works closely with the public sector. According to Martin Delaney, partner, president and chief strategist, the Halifax office has completed a significant amount of work for different government/Crown corporations – including a public awareness campaign for cannabis legalization – the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, the Atlantic Lottery and Prince Edward Island Tourism.

In Toronto, the agency works with clients from QSR to CFG, as well as brands like Goeasy Financial, Fallsview

Casino and SkiptheDishes.

Arrivals + Departures won a pitch for SkiptheDishes in July 2018 and Bevacqua cites its work with the Winnipeg company as the agency's biggest accomplishment in terms of having a real bottom line impact.

SkipTheDishes' national integrated campaign stars *Mad Men*'s Jon Hamm pretending to be an "Ordinary Canadian Guy" and name-checking a bunch of Canuck references while reprimanding an assistant for not being familiar with them.

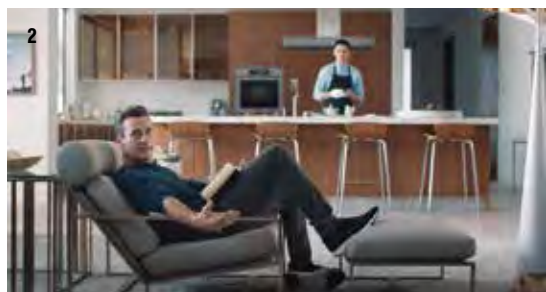
The first iteration of the campaign racked up 1.2 million views on YouTube and the latest spot aired during the premiere of *Survivor*, as well as the finale of *Big Brother Canada*. According to Bevacqua, SkiptheDishes experienced an 83% increase in orders and a 79% boost to its revenue because of the campaign.

"Clients are looking for creative ways to solve their business problems. They want a partner who is invested and understands their business challenges and is willing to go to war with them to achieve success," he says. "There's no shortage of energy and passion for the business. We are young, scrappy, determined and competitive as hell."

## CASES

### 1. Leaving a legacy

For the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, the agency used empathy and empowerment as emotional triggers. When the museum launched its *Mandela: Struggle for Freedom* exhibit, A+D brought his story to life. The "27 minutes for 27 years" film became the core of the campaign, while an ambient installation (the size of the late South African president's prison cell) also putted people in Madiba's shoes.



2. For Skip the Dishes, A+D asked, "Is self indulgence such a bad thing?" while poking fun at the most entitled of them all: celebrities like American actor Jon Hamm.

3. Via commercials and mega boards, the agency flaunted the types of fun people were missing by not visiting Fallsview Casino.



► For full cases, go to [smallaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://smallaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# Lg2 influences subjective design

BY JENNIFER HORN

**KEY NEW BUSINESS**  
13th Street Winery, Fédération motocycliste du Québec, CCM Canada, Casper Canada, Catelli, CIBC Square, Cordon Bleu, IÖGO, Keurig, Lavo, LCBO, Purplebricks, Rate Hub, The Source, Timothy's, Ubisoft

**KEY HIRES**  
Sophie-Annick Vallée, VP, strategy; Anne-Marie Castonguay, VP, data and insights; Ryan Crouchman, CD, design; Antoine Levasseur, group director, design; Joannie Fredette, Martina Djogo, content chiefs

**STAFF**  
**322**

**JUST SO WE'RE CLEAR**, even though Claude Auchu was made CEO of Lg2 less than a year ago from his role as head of design – he's not a suit. In between business meetings with president Jeremy Gayton at Lg2's Toronto office in Liberty Village, VP and ECD Chris Hirsch says a snooping Auchu will often corner him to ask, "Whatcha workin' on? I want to see. Show me something." The designer by trade can't help himself. "Claude will always have that itch to scratch," says Hirsch.

While the CEO may never be cured of his fanaticism for the work, that's not a bad thing. As Lg2 continues to de-silo design from creative and treat it as an integrated service, Hirsch believes Auchu's obsession with the craft will carry the agency's design philosophy forward. "That [dedication to the creative development] has to come from top-down," adds Ryan Crouchman, VP, CD and head of design at Lg2 Toronto. "I felt that support from day one, that ethos was already built into the structure."

Indeed, Lg2's design roots are deep and strong, particularly within *la belle province*. The agency holds massive equity in the branding discipline, even after saying adieu to its studio Lg2boutique – folding it into the creative department and working across markets three years ago. Over the last 15 years, Lg2 has touched up and transformed more than 200 visual brand identities. It's had its hands in projects that range from simple packaging to complex architectural systems for brands from Boreal to Natrel to La Cage. In 2019 alone, and across its three hubs, the agency picked up work for Keurig (Crush, Dr. Pepper, Schweppes), the LCBO, The Source, Timothy's and Ubisoft, to name a few. That

growing client roster came with almost 100 new Lg2ers. Its national headcount now sits at 322.

The success of the agency's Quebec office is a hard act to follow, but Toronto has held its own. Not even six months into launching its own design practice and the office was thrust into the global spotlight. This summer, the shop picked up an Industry Craft Cannes Lion for a project that interrogated preconceived notions around packaging. The "Subjectif" work for new client 13th Street Winery also happened to be the Design Agency of the Year jury's second-favourite piece – the project's high score helped crown Lg2 a Bronze winner. (It also got the fourth-highest score across all six AOY categories.)

The "Subjectif" piece was a labour of love and so many prototypes, says Hirsch. Because drinkers are typically influenced by price, ratings and reviews – not to mention the intimidation factor when it comes to trying a new wine – 13th Street Winery needed to get people to stop judging its bottles by the label and do a blind taste test.

The anti-packaging project involved Lg2 stripping the labels of 12 wine varietals of any and all information. The black minimalist bottles were essentially label-less and people didn't know what type of wine they





were drinking until they finished it. Only then did the typography – which was layered and die-cut – reveal the varietal, from a Merlot to a Pinot Noir. The initial limited run of “Subjectif” cases sold out in less than a month. Now, the brand plans to triple the amount and re-launch the line in the spring of 2020.

Similarly, just as 13th Street Winery let the wine speak for itself in front of customers, Hirsch and Crouchman say the agency will often let the work speak for itself in front of clients.

Crouchman describes a unique-to-Lg2 approach to creative presentations that involves removing selling tactics upfront. After all the heavy-lifting is done – from developing strategy to brand architecture – the team will pin several finished designs on the walls of a room. They then unleash the clients on the work, completely in isolation and without any preamble from creatives.

“We let clients experience the work in a very neutral, unbiased way... They experience it as they would in the real world,” says Crouchman. “And the beauty is that it’s strategically sound. We are all already aligned to the strategy, so we have a guardrail in place and there’s always that one that’s a bulls-eye.”

## CASES



### 1. Make yourself at home

Lg2 was tasked with reinventing a whole new restaurant concept for a younger Gen Z target, while balancing visual similarities to its big brother brand, La Cage Brasserie Sportive. The new resto, called À Domicile (which is the French term for when sports teams play a home game), was designed to make customers feel at home. Equipped with games, comfy seating and a serve-yourself walk-in bar, À Domicile was like a dream basement, only cooler.



2. “Subjectif” is a vintage out of 13th Street Winery and the first to be designed with incognito packaging so that drinkers don’t know what they’re drinking until the bottle is empty.

3. For Hydro-Quebec, Lg2 combined light, which is associated with energy, and the company’s central element (water) to produce a spectrum of orange and the Hydro-Quebec blue.



► For full cases, go to [design.strategyonline.ca/2019](https://design.strategyonline.ca/2019)





# DDB brings design to the forefront

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

**WHEN THE 100-YEAR-OLD** Canadian National Institute for the Blind needed a partner to help it restructure into three separate brands, it called on the team at Twice DDB – the Vancouver graphic design unit of DDB Canada.

Twice studied how the three entities (The CNIB Foundation, Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada and

CNIB Deafblind Community Services) would relate to each other, how they would position themselves, and how that positioning would be communicated internally and externally.

In short, its involvement went far above that of a graphic design shop.

That’s because, two years ago, DDB rebranded the division – previously named Karacters Design Group and now a strategic design consultancy – to reflect the larger strategic role it had begun to play with clients, says VP of brand design Rob Newell, who leads the shop alongside creative director James Bateman. “Rather than signaling a change for the future, it was catching up with where we actually were [as an agency].”

Today, Twice handles major rebranding initiatives with organizations that have multiple stakeholders, require high levels of strategic engagement or face big brand challenges, such as a merger or acquisition. More entrepreneurial clients (with fewer stakeholders), meanwhile, are serviced through local design talent embedded across DDB’s offices in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal and Edmonton.

Brent Choi, who joined DDB Canada in the new dual role of CEO and CCO in February, says the importance of the design discipline – the AOY category in which DDB Canada earned Bronze – has grown as the number of touchpoints between brands and consumers has increased: “Design is one of the critical elements that



#### KEY NEW BUSINESS

Rogers Wireless, Destiny Bioscience, Q-Collar/Q30 Innovations, Athabasca University, Royal Canadian Legion, McCain, 3M, Wellness Foods - Simply Protein, Nestle, Edmonton Election Alberta, Edmonton Economic Development

#### KEY HIRES

Brent Choi, CEO and CCO; Graham Candy, VP, strategy; Eddy Lee, SVP, analytics; Shelly Waterhouse, SVP, client services

STAFF  
**220**

ties things together and gives a brand its identity. When we think about that, we want to make sure that our design team is at the forefront of all the thinking we do.”

Choi was named to the top job at DDB around the time of the departures of CEO and chairman Frank Palmer, president and COO Lance Saunders, and president of DDB Toronto Melanie Johnston. His arrival marked a changing of the guard for the 70-year-old agency, which recently unveiled a new global visual identity led by the design team at DDB North America.

Tasked with leading the agency both from a creative and business perspective, Choi has spent the last several months positioning the agency to better leverage its multidisciplinary expertise.

This year, DDB made a number of hires across its creative and strategy teams, as well as its shopper marketing, PR and CRM divisions. Craig Jenkins was appointed ECD of TracyLocke, while Amy Mateer was promoted to the VP of client services role. Shelley Waterhouse was named SVP and head of client service for TrackDBB, whose 12-person data and analytics team is now led by SVP of analytics Eddy Lee.

Meanwhile, design is at the forefront of almost all of

those capabilities.

“There’s more pressure than ever on our designers to understand designing for mobile, app or web, events and PR, shopper, and everything we do,” Choi adds. “They have to be ambidextrous.”

To meet those needs, Howard Poon, who leads a small team out of Edmonton as VP and director of design, says the agency has been hiring designers with new in-demand skills, such as motion design and iconography, and up-skilling via training and employee development. Newell says the focus has also been to bring in outside help, such as structural packaging experts or architectural designers, as almost every project requires some niche level of expertise.

DDB’s depth across the discipline was showcased in its work for the 40th anniversary of the Advertising Club of Edmonton (see sidebar), Poon says. Riffing off the industry’s obsession with artificial intelligence, the agency rebranded AI as “advertising intelligence” and used it as a creative platform.

“It really demonstrated how design is part of the entire process, and it isn’t just coming in and decorating through an aesthetic approach.”

## CASES



### 1. Open for business

When the Royal Alberta Museum was moving to a new state-of-the-art home, DDB believed a new building deserved a new attitude. To build buzz after a three-year closure of the museum, crates were placed in prominent locations and tagged with witty headlines to showcase the diversity and quirkiness of its artifacts, like Dodo eggs and a pickled frog. It also embraced a familiar RAM brand icon (pictured) and made it ubiquitous, leveraging it as a fun and more current museum logo.

2. For the Advertising Club of Edmonton Awards, the shop built a futuristic event with a host, dubbed “AI:40.” The play off of artificial intelligence showed that while much has changed, the fundamentals of advertising remain paramount.  
3. DDB built a digital version of the Edmonton International Airport’s annual report. Using a scrolling action, people could travel through “Airport City” and the site invited viewers to become part of the growth – a nod to the brand’s positioning and tag: “We’ll Move You.”



► For full cases, go to [designwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://designwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# FCB goes back to Gold

BY JENNIFER HORN

## FCB CANADA PROVED GOOD THINGS COME IN FOURS.

Every year, since 2016, the advertising firm has stepped up to the Gold podium to claim the top Digital prize.

It's an impressive four-peat considering FCB Toronto was reported to have "fallen on hard times" and had become "an agency in decline" following the loss of TD, which initiated a leadership shake-up in 2014. To weather that storm, the shoes of outgoing veterans (CCO Robin Heisey and CEO Paul Mead) were filled by incoming leaders (FCB CEO Tyler Turnbull, FCB/Six president Andrea Cook, as well as CCOs Nancy Crimi-Lamanna and Jeff Hiltz).

The shop quickly defied the laws of gravity, moving up and away from difficult times to land BMW, BMO and Home Depot as clients. The awards circuit has also been kind to the agency. In 2019, FCB Canada brought home five Lions from Cannes, making it the most awarded Canadian agency on *la Croisette's* red carpet, two years in a row.

"When [the new leadership team] started in Toronto, we set a vision to build an agency that we always wanted to work for," says Tyler Turnbull, just days after his September promotion to CEO of FCB North America was revealed. "Most of us had worked with many different companies, from independent agencies to networks and even client side. What unified us was that desire to make the best creative work of our careers."

No doubt one of FCB's strongest aces is FCB/Six. Many of those trophies from Cannes were inscribed with the digital and CRM shop's name, right beside cultural collective Black & Abroad and its campaign, "Go Back to Africa." FCB can also thank Six and its data-rich program for securing the 2019 Digital Campaign of the Year, catapulting the shop to the top of the AOY ranks.

The work (see sidebar) is an "expression of our vision as an agency" which is "individualized brands at scale," says Ian MacKenzie, who also boasts a new title. The recently named CCO says FCB/Six "revels in

## NEW BUSINESS

The Home Depot, BMO Acquisition, Tilray, Lottomax, Altea, Vitamin Water, Tresemme, J&J Visioncare, Consumer and Surgical, Kijiji, Kaleo, Novartis, Babyspark, Genpact, SiriusXM

## NEW HIRES

Jonathan Careless, Tory McGuinness, Jennifer Rossini, Les Soos, Group CDs; Tim Welsh, VP, managing director; Rob Sturch, CD; Paul Hanlon, director, strategy; Sylvain Dufresne, VP, head of creative

## STAFF 207

finding interesting lever points between technical complexity, messaging complexity and creative storytelling,” which “Go Back to Africa” delivered in spades.

Few agencies find jolly in the arduous task of plotting and navigating complex consumer journeys. So it’s no surprise, then, that 30% of FCB/Six business is now tied to clients in the pharma, health and wellness categories. “When you think about the space there’s tremendous complexity to the messaging matrix,” says MacKenzie, adding that his agency has developed an “appreciation and bedrock” for mapping the intersecting journeys of healthcare professionals and patients.

FCB/Six has grown its pharma base organically through Johnson & Johnson and now bills 15 over-the-counter J&J brands, as well as the company’s Visioncare, Consumer and Surgical arms, says president Andrea Cook. It’s done this by proving its expertise in the field of one-to-one marketing – via other targeted campaigns like PFLAG’s “Destination Pride” – and positioning itself to meet the demands of the growing industry, says Cook.

“[Pharma is] a vertical that [historically] shied away from technology and data pretty heavily, for obvious regulatory reasons. But I think, as people are able to better access information about their health – it’s caused an evolution in the way that pharmaceutical companies market themselves.”

Cook adds that some of the marketing fundamentals typically applied in other categories, like finance and automotive, are lost on pharma. For example, the agency recently faced a compliance issue when it recommended a brand use texts to remind people to take their medication. “We didn’t think to ask the question because we assumed it [had been done before]... But SMS applied to that scenario was groundbreaking.”

“We’ve gotten feedback from [our pharma] clients who love the outside perspective of other businesses,” says Cook. “Some of our most successful campaigns have been when we stopped the presses on the way they traditionally market to healthcare professionals [and patients] and do it in a way that we would in [other categories.]”

Though the industry has some catching up to do on best practices, MacKenzie doesn’t doubt there’s lots of innovation happening (particularly within biotech) and so “it makes sense for us to work with companies that are on the frontier of their disciplines.” Just as FCB/Six looks to be at the vanguard of data, tech and creativity.

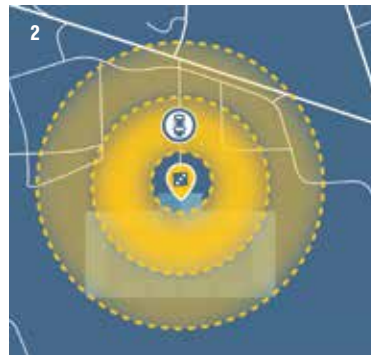
## CASES

### 1. Displacing centuries-old hate

The agency was the creative catalyst for the “Go Back To Africa” campaign for Black & Abroad. It took hateful online content and reworked it to become headlines that reclaimed the slur, creating hyper-targeted ads for each of Africa’s 54 countries. Google AI pulled from thousands of images to create what was missing in travel ads – people of color visiting tourism spots in Africa. Customized ads were served (based on online behaviour) and interest for the brand’s Africa Tours spiked. The ads also drove back to GoBackToAfrica.com, a first-of-its-kind socially sourced content platform that aimed to displace the racism and hate.



### Digital Campaign of The Year



2. To reflect its commitment to renewable energy, Gaz Metro thought it was time for a new name: Énergir was rolled out with a campaign that signaled the brand’s awareness of the changing (climate) times.

3. FCB had Fountain Tire staff paint themselves and create a font that would be used by football fans to cheer on the Edmonton Oilers across social media.



► For full cases, go to [digitalwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](https://digitalwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)





# Zulu Alpha Kilo goes deeper on data

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

**SINCE ITS FOUNDING ELEVEN YEARS AGO**, Zulu Alpha Kilo has operated on the belief that “the world needs more creativity,” says Zak Mroueh, the agency’s founder, CEO and CCO, from a boardroom in its labyrinthine offices in Toronto’s east end.

That founding mantra guides everything Zulu does, Mroueh contends, from deciding not to participate in spec work pitches, to remaining independent, to treating strategy and creative as one discipline. To this day, the founder believes what differentiates his agency is its “genuine passion and maniacal obsession with the end creative product.”

The world is not the place it was eleven years ago, though. Big Data has led some creative thinkers to push back against numbers superceding old-fashioned intuition. But Mroueh believes the two can happily co-exist, and he’s structuring Zulu accordingly – without, he says, losing sight of the agency’s original purpose.

“A lot of companies are changing themselves to be about data,” says Mike Sutton, president of the Bronze Digital AOY shop. “Our data practice hasn’t completely changed the purpose of who we are as a company – it’s enhancing our ability to be more creative.”

Within the last year, Zulu’s data team has been “instrumental” in helping some clients transform their social strategies, which at times has involved posting content less frequently, Sutton says. Its capabilities have helped clients revise their online strategy for the better, with “higher engagement, more positive sentiment and improved content.”

Earlier this year, Zulu promoted brand innovation director Sean Bell into the new role of group strategy director, content and innovation. Bell leads a multidisciplinary team working on strategies, digital properties, social platforms and emerging media. The group was behind “Earning Curve,” an award-winning

## KEY NEW BUSINESS

Subaru, Responsible Gambling Council, Fuzz Wax Bar, NobleGen, Senokot, SingleCut Beersmiths, Coalition for Gun Control

## NEW HIRES

Catherine Allen, Ian Simpson, Rodger Eyre, Gerald Kugler, group CDs; Ryan Booth, CD, design; Susie Lee, Jonathan Smith, CDs; Elliot Riordan, Caroline Sierra-Bornais, Anton Garneau, ADs; Marco Buchar, Susanne Gardynik, Victoria Lee, CWs

STAFF  
125

branded podcast series for Interac that helped the brand connect with small business owners.

Often collaborating with planners and creatives on the floor, Bell says his role entails having “one foot in the present and one foot in the future” in order to identify opportunities where data can inspire or bolster an idea.

As it has outgrown its original office space, Zulu is expanding into adjacent buildings, which has led to divided departments, with the exception of the data team, which sits comfortably on the same floor as creatives (and Mroueh himself).

“We sit the creative with the data analysts and have them ideate and collaborate together to bring the best of both worlds into the conversation from the beginning,” says Bell. “For some of our clients that have rich, first-party data sets – where they have transactions rolling in literally by the second – there are opportunities for creative and data to be equal partners in the development of an idea.”

Mroueh envisions an expanded role for data in the creative process down the road, creating a new kind of team that includes not only an art director, copywriter, planner and designer, but also a data analyst that can help quell concerns around fact-based decision making.

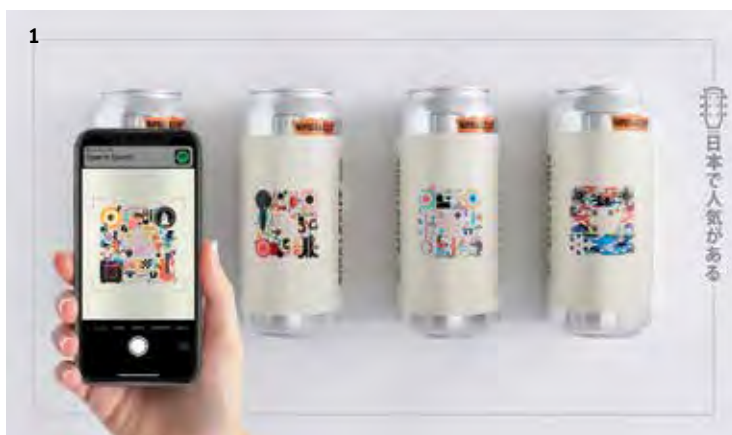
“For the client, [data is] strategy and facts. But we want it to be creative jet fuel,” Mroueh says.

Mroueh keeps Zulu’s future plans for the data team close to his chest. “There are some things I wouldn’t want to say publicly, to be honest... I’d rather do it first.”

He has reason to be guarded. Mroueh says Zulubot – the agency’s content division that launched in 2014 and created Harley Davidson’s “Common Ground” and Tim Hortons’ “The Away Game” – is booming and consists of almost 20 full-time employees. “I’ve had other agencies come by and do a tour,” he says, “and the next thing I know they’re trying to set up a content division.”

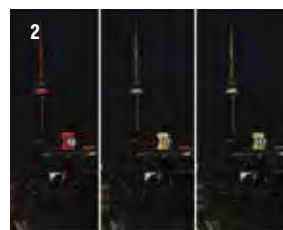
Sutton considers Zulubot to be the shop’s “secret weapon” and says its success comes from more than having added editing suites and recording studios. “It’s easy to copy the functional things,” he says. But the agency has a level of expertise that comes from having managed a ton of different work for clients (ranging from short-form to long-form digital videos that eventually aired on TV), says Sutton. In 2018 alone, the studio was responsible for more than a thousand individual pieces of content. “The real unique differentiating point [for Zulubot] is all of the learning and capabilities that we built [over the last five years].”

## CASES



### 1. Follow the tune to find the brew

Just how do you make it Big in Japan? You use beer, gaming and QR codes. Singlecut Beersmiths in New York was looking to launch its new product, Big in Japan IPA, with a splash. So the agency created the first-ever Spotify-enabled beer that used QR codes to turn each label into a game of “Name That Tune,” directing consumers to a song. Gamified codes were also shared on Instagram to let people know where they could find the brew, creating a new kind of beer game.



2. The shop linked Kitchen Aid’s iconic mixer with the star of Toronto’s skyline: the CN Tower. A billboard of the multi-hued mixer changed colours in sync with the tower, showcasing the endless potential for personalization of the product.

3. To get people to sign a petition for the Coalition for Gun Control, Zulu gave Canadians the opportunity to identify just how close they were to a shooting via an app. Users were encouraged to share staggering findings on social media and to add their signature to the battle against gun violence.

► For full cases, go to [digitalwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](https://digitalwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)

# Initiative flips the script

BY BREE RODY-MANTHA

## KEY NEW BUSINESS

Keurig-Dr. Pepper, Travel Alberta, Revlon, Cineplex, Converse, Canada Goose

## KEY HIRES

Ryan Van Dongen, VP, client management; Ema Haracic, director, communications design; Raffaele Ricchio, director, communications design

## STAFF 110

**HELEN GALANIS SAYS IT'S EASY** to forget media planning is more than a two-way collaboration between client and agency. Too often, media partners are left out of the equation, says the Initiative president – but she wants her shop to be the one that brings them into the fold.

“Media partners matter so much more to clients than they did 10 years ago,” she says. “With all these important large digital players, they have capital that our clients want access to. The traditional relationships with media agencies and those partners have been kind of adversarial. I want to take a decidedly opposite approach to it and invite them in.”

There’s payoff for clients. Galanis says the closer it works with media companies, the more opportunities it has to create first-to-market work – such as the on-set drive-thru window it produced for Wendy’s on Corus’ *Big Brother Canada*.

Initiative is in the final year of a three-year plan to improve its reputation within the Canadian marketplace – it’s perhaps appropriate that 2019 culminated in a Gold Media Agency of the Year award for the shop.

“One term that comes back to me a lot is ‘partner,’” says Ishma Alexander-Huet, VP of client advice and management at Initiative. “I think people see us as a team that always wants to respond, wants to engage and tap into ideas, creating something together versus just transacting on a cost.”

One of the ways Initiative brought its “partner” identity to life this year was through its first “reverse upfront” in Canada.

The spring event brought together 150 marketing and media professionals with an upfront-style presentation showcasing Initiative’s best work while also focusing on broader industry trends and challenges.

The target was not prospective clients, but rather



media partners such as Google, Amazon, Cineplex and Twitter, all of whom were in the crowd.

“Our partners have now seen below our hood,” says Alexander-Huet. “There are things we could just mention in a brief, but in that forum environment, we can let media partners in on what’s driving our clients’ business.”

And it’s not just media partners that Initiative is looking to develop stronger relationships.

The much-lauded “Go Back to Africa” campaign for Black & Abroad (see sidebar) was the result of a collaboration with creative agency FCB/Six. The agencies used media insights – social media users tell people of colour to “Go back to Africa” every three minutes – to hyper-target travel ads for 54 different African countries. The ads drove people to a curated content hub, driving brand awareness and fighting stereotypes.

“I liked the fact that we had such a short line to [FCB/Six] where we could jump into a room and hammer out a strategy so quickly. It was brave, but it was also just culturally relevant,” says Galanis.

Challenging conventions is something Galanis prides herself in, even when the convention is media itself. She says the agency has created a branded content series on Amazon’s video platform (see sidebar), which has





been a bit of a change for a buying agency. Initiative is beginning to support the “creation of content in lieu of so many traditional paid media options,” says Galanis. “It’s challenged us to get smart about how content takes on virality, how people discover it and how it works on Amazon’s content ecosystem. If we’re only paid media experts, we’re limiting ourselves to our clients.”

Within its walls, Initiative is also informing more campaigns through econometric modeling, which has helped drive its business results mission home.

Market Mix Modeling (MMM) – which measures the effectiveness of marketing activity in terms of its contribution to metrics, such as sales volume – is nothing new, says Galanis.

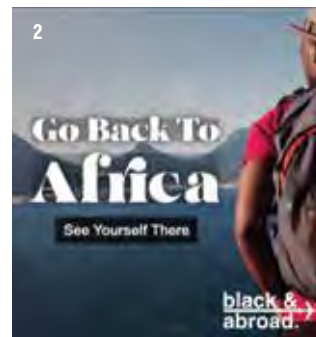
“In fact, many of our clients have gotten those [business insights] through other sources.” But when a media agency handles the modeling, she says “[the insights] are not just look-back information. It allows us to change the way we plan. We can model [our plans] to foot traffic, to brand awareness scores, whatever the business KPI is. Every single client who has engaged in one of those projects with us has come back for more.”

## CASES



### 1. Going beyond paid media

For Destination Canada, Initiative reached a new OTT audience with a unique docu-series, as told through the voices of inspirational Americans visiting Canada for the first time. *Vacations of the Brave* launched as the first-ever branded content show to be featured on Amazon Prime. Cut down videos of the long-form series allowed the brand to share some of the bite-sized experiences on YouTube, reaching those without a Prime subscription.



2. For Black & Abroad's "Go Back to Africa" campaign, the agency leveraged the creative concept's inherently social power to deliver customized ads to potential tourists.

3. Initiative invited people to participate in the creation of Lego's "Mystery Mural" in Toronto during the holiday season, while live footage of the build was shared to reach everyone else.



► For full cases, go to [mediawinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://mediawinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# Touché!'s people-based planning

BY KRISTYN ANTHONY

**WHEN TOUCHÉ! PRESIDENT KARINE COURTEMANCHE** told *strategy* last year the agency had “invested a lot in the back-end of our operation,” she wasn’t kidding.

Tech and talent were the agency’s focus heading into 2019 and its holistic approach has paid off. Revenues from its research initiatives have doubled for the second consecutive year and the launch of Omni, a data source platform, is changing the way the agency looks at media.

Understanding data and technology and putting it to use in valuable ways is a game every agency played in 2019. Courtemanche calls it, “the cost of entry” into the industry these days. “If somebody cannot do it, it’s just not the business for them anymore.”

The 2019 RECMA report ranked Touché! #1, atop a total of 20 Canadian agencies, scoring high for both vitality and structure and maintaining a comfortable and steady lead when compared to the next top five

agencies including OMD, Cossette Media, Carat, UM and Initiative. More than \$33 million in revenue is generated monthly for the agency’s clients, most famous among them Via Rail and Canadian Tire, both of whom Touché! continues to pick up honours both in Canada and abroad.

Media spend may have increased in the last few years, but president Karine Courtemanche says there’s a feeling that clients are more conservative with their dollars. “It’s not about flexing your muscles and putting more money out there than your competitors,” she explains, but rather finding ways to stretch a media budget, something Touché! has seen success with Omni.

Courtemanche uses its Sport Chek campaign that tracked customer habits around “digital window shopping” as an example (see sidebar). The real-time data found which items consumers left in their online





#### NEW KEY BUSINESS

Bombardier  
Recreational  
Products (LATAM  
and EMEA markets)

#### NEW HIRES

Émilie Bertrand,  
media supervisor;  
Emily Dupras-  
Rioux, manager,  
programmatic;  
Kristine Sherliker,  
group account  
director; Marivic  
Idanan, supervisor,  
strategy

STAFF  
259

shopping carts, providing insight as to what products the brand chose to put on sale or feature in ads during a Black Friday event. Those same insights can now be used for future campaigns, she says.

For Touché!, which holds roughly 40% of Quebec's ad market in its portfolio, reaching new clients is increasingly difficult, so the development of Omni has been the focus. "If we want to grow revenue, we have to grow internally within our own existing clients," says director of marketing science, Jean-Francois Bourdeau.

Omni is able to build audiences based on browsing behaviour, purchase history or other content users interact with. The platform launched this year in Canada and was made fully operational in the fall.

The game plan for 2020 is to onboard every client to Omni; the platform started with global clients like Volkswagen and BRP and is now focused on national clients like Canadian Tire, Via Rail, Agropur and Montreal Tourism. The new campaigns for these clients are in part integrated with Omni, he says, and many have been exposed to the basics.

Bourdeau calls it a complete "people-based platform" for digital planning.

"We can activate these audiences because we can see the online inventory in real-time," he adds.

With a team of 15, including three statisticians, between Toronto and Montreal, Omni has helped Touché! double revenues, he says. "People are coming to us for our expertise in multitouch attribution, marketing mix modeling and research."

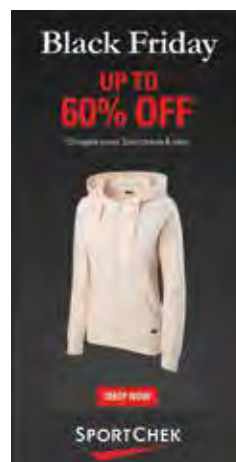
Continuing to make headway in the Toronto market remains a top priority for Touché! heading into 2020. However, Courtemanche points out in the process of growing nationally, the agency picked up some clients in the U.S. and Latin America, as well as the global AOR mandate for Bombardier Recreational Products.

"We realized that's our new benchmark," she says of acquiring international business. "To us, changing the benchmarks to which we compare ourselves in something that we want to play up in 2020. We started as a good Quebec agency, then became a Canadian agency. Now, we're looking at ourselves to be among the best in the world."

## CASES

### 1. At the speed of hydro

When Hydro-Québec wanted to boost pride in its ranks and improve its connection with younger Québeckers, Touché! knew triggers like technology, adventure and entertainment would get their attention. So it partnered with a notable marathoner and filmmaker to deliver on all three fronts. A fully immersive, high-adrenaline journey documented the 2,000 km path an electron takes to bring light and warmth to urban customers. Breathtaking photos, Instagram stories, YouTube videos and Facebook Live events told the story of the marathoners' quest to traverse the hydro lines' terrain.



2. For BRP, the agency helped make The Ryker resonate with a new generation of riders using pop culture, it was able to break away from Spyder's image, and build credibility for The Ryker by featuring it in content such as music videos.

3. The shop used data around abandoned products in online carts with "Digital Window Shopping," using the intel to make those desired items the stars of a digital ad push for Sport Chek.

► For cases, go to [maoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](https://maoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)





# Narrative's creative bravery

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

**WITH ROOTS IN MEDIA RELATIONS**, Narrative's role was once focused on helping leaders decide "when to speak, how to speak, when not to speak, when to turn an opportunity down," says Sarah Spence, managing director of the Toronto-based PR firm. "Corporate bravery" was most often channeled through advertising, she says, while media relations played a different albeit complementary role.

Today, amid a drop in consumer trust and brands' desire to play a more activist role in social causes – thanks to widening definitions of corporate purpose – she believes PR firms have a greater role to play in getting clients to express their "creative bravery."

Narrative put this thinking on display in a number of recent campaigns, including those which earned the agency Gold in PR AOY after earning Silver last year.

Embracing creative bravery means knowing not everyone will react positively to a campaign – at least

initially. When Narrative worked with sister agency Bensimon Byrne to launch "June's Eatery" for Toronto's Casey House in 2017, there was a risk that negative online comments could inadvertently reinforce the HIV stigma that the campaign was meant to help eliminate.

But, as the agencies predicted, the exposure also prompted other social media users to "pounce" on those comments and promptly correct them, noted Joseph Bonnici, partner, ECD at Bensimon Byrne, at the time.

Narrative knew a similar dynamic would likely play out following the launch of Healing House, the world's first pop-up HIV-positive spa, last year. Right on cue, the online trolls came out, reinforcing the campaign's argument that stigma still persists. However, the tactic also prompted many more positive responses and significant media coverage for Casey House.

"What I want is conversations," Spence says, adding that negative comments aren't always campaign killers

**KEY NEW  
BUSINESS**  
Starbucks, JW  
Marriott Edmonton

**NEW HIRES**  
Andrea Lee and  
Kylee Berencsi,  
account directors;  
Matt Childerhose,  
AD; Lisa Riedel,  
event manager; Tony  
Koutoulas, account  
manager;  
Gigi Rabnett,  
event producer

**STAFF**  
**45**

– even for a firm tasked with protecting brand and corporate reputation. “Controversy in and of itself isn’t great, but controversy that sheds light on an important issue is a great thing.”

Another sign of a strong PR program, the managing director believes, is having “people come to raise their voice [and] be advocates without you asking them to.” Such was the case with “Boys Don’t Cry,” which was also recognized as the PR Campaign of the Year.

The work was creatively led by Bensimon, but as the agency’s PR partner, Narrative got a coalition of influencers to share the three-minute film confronting toxic masculinity on their channels, including members of the Toronto Maple Leafs and several Canadian mayors. Soon, others, including American actor and activist George Takei, voluntarily showed their support.

When hiring new staff, Narrative CD Debbie Chan says agency looks for “hybrid” employees with a combination of skills, because timelines are tight and they “almost have to be the idea person and the person who can execute perfectly.”

“We’re trying to build a team where every member has a different background and a different expertise, because of the different work that we do,” Chan says.

“Sometimes it’s design, sometimes it’s advertising, sometimes it’s purely experiential.”

Today, Narrative’s eight-person creative department works closely alongside client services (referred to as the “brand team”) on developing creative strategies, says Cathy Mitchell, VP of clients, strategy and counsel – following a structure commonly found in creative agencies. Traditionally, the bulk of that work would have been handled by the accounts team.

Recruiting talent with diverse backgrounds and skill sets is helping Narrative meet the ever-increasing needs of its clients. “Design, advertising, PR, they’re all kind of [coming] together,” Spence says. “Those lines are all blurring, because they’re all just ways to tell stories.”

She points to a recent assignment for the Scotiabank Women Initiative, aimed at supporting female leaders in business. What began as a fairly straightforward communications strategy assignment soon turned into a design project focused on helping the bank launch the program with a new logo and visual identity.

These days, Spence says, Narrative is doing its most interesting work in “the space between what a corp comms team will do in-house, and what a traditional marketing or advertising team will do.”

## CASES

### PR Campaign of The Year



#### 1. Influencing the anti-bullying narrative

For White Ribbon, Narrative helped spread awareness around the non-profit’s Anti-Bullying Day by building buzz for a powerful film that illustrates how the events in a boy’s life can lead to toxic masculinity. To maximize exposure for the video that calls out the many pivotal moments that shape the type of man a child becomes, a coalition of bully activists, sports teams and political figures shared this important message. The “Boys Don’t Cry” microsite provided tips for building healthy masculinity and encouraged people to take the White Ribbon anti-bullying pledge.

2. The PR firm built hype for Converse in a back-to-school push. A Queen St. West takeover saw Toronto bus shelters become installations and pairs of Chucks were hung and claimed by new owners so they could create stories of their own.



3. For Casey House, Narrative helped the brand tackle AIDS stigma with a spa staffed with HIV+ healers and therapists. An integrated PR and social campaign further drove the narrative around touch and debunked the fears around contraction.



► For full cases, go to [prwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://prwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# Weber Shandwick finds strength in diversity

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

**WEBER SHANDWICK CANADA FIRST MOVED** towards an integrated model in 2016 – a full year before its counterparts across the global PR network.

It wasn't a formal pilot, says Canadian CEO Greg Power, but its success at driving organic growth with large clients caught the attention of network upper-brass, who polished and refined the Canadian model before taking it global in 2017. Those early efforts continue to pay dividends, with the agency earning a

Silver in PR AOY – its first podium finish since *strategy* introduced the category in 2014. Last year, it generated 17 new business wins and saw 34% organic growth from its top ten clients. While that has slowed this year, the agency has seen net new business from clients including IBM and Mondelez.

Today, Weber (whose offices span Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal) operates on a specialist model bringing together teams across client experience, insights, creative and content, as well as integrated media. It's a transformation that has required a fair bit of staffing up.

In February 2018, the agency hired Line Atallah as SVP and office lead in Montreal (one of its fastest-growing markets). With a background in AI, Atallah is focused on implementing new technologies for clients



## KEY NEW BUSINESS

IBM, Mondelez, Goodfood, Manitoba Hydro, Servier Canada, Fraser Valley Real Estate, Global Container Terminals, Music Canada

## KEY HIRES

Line Atallah, SVP, office leader, Montreal; Ryan Bazeley, SVP integrated media; Julie Holroyde, SVP client experience; Jamie Hong, director of data and analytics; Sara Cook, VP Integrated project management

## STAFF 71

and is working with chief digital officer Chris Perry on data-driven strategies across Weber's operations.

Transforming an agency requires bulking up at the top-end. But Power believes it's important not to lose sight of up-and-coming talent, who represent the next gen leaders.

As part of that focus, Weber has made diversity and inclusion a cornerstone of its hiring practices over the last few years, both at home and abroad. In 2017, it launched a new offering, led out of its Center for Talent Innovation in New York, geared towards advising clients on their diversity, equity and inclusion strategies.

"A lot of [minorities] have to hack life in a way that not everybody does, and it brings more resilience and creativity," Power says. "It's a huge opportunity for Canadian agencies."

In Canada, 21% of new Weber hires in 2018 were women, visible minorities, Indigenous, had a disability or were identified as LGBTQ – a percentage that grew to 66% of new employees in 2019. And in May, it established the Weber Shandwick Richard Ellis Scholarship, a \$1,000 prize awarded to a PR student at Humber College who demonstrates a passion for improving diversity and inclusion in the industry.

The agency has simultaneously worked on another piece of the talent puzzle: ensuring it keeps the staff it hires, while enabling junior employees to grow and up-skill along the way.

Three years ago, in honour of a deceased former employee, it began awarding a \$2,500 Nicola Moore Courageous Creativity Prize to a junior staffer for a "career-changing experience" of his or her choosing, Power says. One recipient, for example, used the money to travel to Venice for a photography course. "It gives them new insights that they bring back to their career and the agency."

Building off that philosophy, Weber recently became the first Canadian agency to pilot a Student Debt Savings Program through insurance provider Great-West Life. Adoption of its RRSP plan was considerably low among young employees, Power says. Many are unable to contribute to their retirements, because they're focused on paying off student debt, which in 2017 had climbed to an average of \$26,000 for recent graduates. So Weber now matches employees' student loan payments with contributions towards their RRSPs.

More than helping to attract new talent, these programs contribute to a broader agency culture that helps retain more experienced staff, Power says. Besides, in his experience, it's not uncommon for an intern to become an invaluable part of the organization. "You look at them two years into their career and think, 'Where would we be without them?'"

As a whole, the shop's approach to talent is rooted in the idea that "great thinking comes from the periphery, from the places you're not necessarily looking," as Power puts it. There's no periphery without a diverse workforce. And no client success without great thinking.

## CASES

### 1. Parka in the woods

For Woods, Weber Shandwick brought the Parka war from the fashion runway back to where it all began: the wild. The Woods Parka Lodge, a traditional yurt made and insulated by the fabric of the new Woods Alverston Expedition parka, was listed on Airbnb. It allowed people to literally live in the brand's outdoor gear, and launched the parka into a whole new world. The agency drove buzz via a content partnership with the Daily Hive's travel section and it also spun off some pretty unique social video.

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2



2. Although most Canadians know what McHappy Day is, not everyone remembers to participate in the fundraiser. So Weber enlisted influencers to start the #MyPledge momentum and expand the program's reach.

3. The shop tapped into Palentine's Day (the day before Valentine's Day), bringing friends together via the Dairy Milk Oreo bar and creating "Pallentines Pals" in partnership with CTV's *The Launch*.

3



► For full cases, go to [prwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://prwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



# Edelman brings in creative guns

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

**FOR YEARS, EDELMAN HAS BEEN STOCKING** the arsenal while making steady advancements on the creative battlefield. With the arrival of Judy John as its first global CCO in February, the PR firm is closer to having what it takes to become a creative powerhouse.

After having made the decision five years ago to expand beyond traditional PR offerings, the firm – named Bronze PR AOY for the second year in a row – now serves as the lead agency partner for many of its clients, according to Lisa Kimmel, president and CEO of Edelman Canada.

While it didn't place in the main Agency of the Year category, Edelman was the only PR firm to be shortlisted. In fact, it's the only communications shop to ever land as a finalist in the category that typically features creative

agencies. Over the last year, it led entire advertising programs for clients ranging from Skittles to Sanofi Genzyme and CropLife Canada. Specifically, its work for Osteoporosis Canada has been gaining attention globally, with its creatively led "Bubl Fashion" winning a Bronze Pharma Lion in 2019 for drawing attention to what can often be an "invisible disease," working with designer David Dixon to create a fashion line that incorporated bubble wrap.

"[CEO] Richard Edelman's goal is to continue to elevate the quality of the creative product that we're delivering to clients," says Kimmel. "The fact that someone like Judy John was willing to come on board demonstrates the belief in our vision and this notion of earned at the core and social by design."

John is the former CEO of Leo Burnett Canada and CCO of Leo Burnett North America. Now, at Edelman, she oversees a network of 600 creatives and strategists globally. Her hiring, Kimmel says, was about needing a cross-market leader to steer the agency's already sizeable investments in its creative capabilities.

Globally, John's influence has already been felt outside of the creative department. In October, Edelman appointed Yannis Kotziagkiaouridis, the former global chief analytics officer at Wunderman Thompson, to the new role of global head of data and analytics. He is set to lead the firm's 210-person global research and analytics consultancy, Edelman Intelligence. According to *PR Week*, Richard Edelman had been in talks with Kotziagkiaouridis about the role for two years. "I was like a gum under his shoe. I never gave up," the global CEO said, adding that John's appointment "was part of persuading him."

The hiring of Kotziagkiaouridis signals that data and analytics are core to Edelman's global strategy, Kimmel adds, noting that the Canadian division is further along in investing in those capabilities than other regions. Locally, Edelman's data and analytics team consists of 15 staff. The firm began building the offering in February

2015, along with the hiring of Catherine Yuile, EVP of insights and analytics. In addition, EVP of digital and national practice lead, Dave Fleet now manages a team of 38 and the agency expects to hire someone to oversee a three-person planning group. Nirmala Bahall arrived in June 2018 as an SVP, managing six staff in paid and performance marketing.

On the creative side, CCO Andrew Simon has been leading the department (now at 18 employees) since 2015 and works closely with Leilah Ambrose, VP and creative director in Toronto, as well as VP and creative director Mike Shackle, who was hired in April to lead the offering in Vancouver.

Some other PR firms in Canada have similarly invested in a more integrated offering. But what differentiates Edelman, according to Kimmel, is that it was first out of the gate. She says the privately held firm began investing in talent before there was even a clear client need.

"I do believe that we're still ahead of our competitors in terms of the depth of expertise that we have in each of those capabilities," Kimmel says. "The reality is that we have senior leadership across all [disciplines] and have had the same people in place for [some time]."

## CASES



### 1. Bring on the cheese

When Taco Bell was set to reintroduce a Canadian-exclusive, Edelman made the most of a truly Canadian activation. The shop created the world's first snow slide-thru to get Canadians excited about the return of the Cheetos Crunchwrap Slider. It then targeted platforms in the U.S. where Gen Zers follow food trends (Teen Vogue and Delish) and built buzz by playing up the FOMO card of being "only available in Canada." Not only did Canadians fall in love with the product all over again, they also won bragging rights over their neighbours to the south.



2. To reinforce the true diversity and breadth of real beauty, Dove created the #ShowUs public image bank. To get the word out, the firm partnered with influencers, one of whom appeared unretouched in an issue of *Chatelaine*.

3. When the WestJet-Onex deal was announced, Edelman worked to quell concerns around the proposed acquisition. Front-line workers were given crafted FAQs to quickly address questions once the news hit. And calls were made to priority politicians to highlight the merits of the deal in order to spur approval.



► For full cases, go to [prwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019](http://prwinners.strategyonline.ca/2019)



## 2019 AGENCY OF THE YEAR | JUDGES

### AGENCY OF THE YEAR



**Richard Bartrem**  
VP, marketing comms,  
WestJet



**Joseph Bonnici**  
CD, partner  
Bensimon Byrne



**Marianne Hamilton**  
CMO  
Rakuten Kobo



**Jason Hill**  
CD  
Target Marketing



**Alyssa Huggins**  
VP, brand & integrated  
marketing, Princess Margaret  
Cancer Foundation



**Andrea Hunt**  
SVP, CMO  
Aterra Wines



**Graham Lang**  
CCO  
Juniper Park/TBWA



**Alison Lawler-Dean**  
Marketing &  
comms specialist  
ALD



**Matt Litzinger**  
Founder, president, CCO  
The Local Collective



**Helen Pak**  
SVP, global creative, marketing  
design and content, Disney



**Shane Skillen**  
CEO, head innovator  
Hotspex



**Matt Syberg-Olsen**  
ECD  
Doug&Partners



**Yvonne Ziomecki**  
EVP, marketing & sales  
HomeEquity

### DESIGN AGENCY OF THE YEAR



**Bill Baker**  
Founder  
Consonant Skincare



**Chris Bjerrisgaard**  
Director of marketing  
Vancouver Island Brewing



**Kar Yan Cheung**  
Director of design strategy  
Bruce Mau Design



**Scott Friedman**  
Chief innovation officer, EVP  
Idea Couture



**Amanda Happé**  
Founder, CD  
Working Session



**Emma Knight**  
Co-founder  
Greenhouse



**John Larigakis**  
CD  
123w



**Stephane Monnet**  
Founder, CD  
Monnet Design



**Thomas Pigeon**  
Founder, CEO  
Pigeon Brands

### DIGITAL AGENCY OF THE YEAR



**Jason Chaney**  
Founder  
AdVice



**Maya Lange**  
VP, global marketing  
Destination BC



**Kelly Miller**  
Ecommerce & digital  
marketing lead  
Conagra



**Krystle Mullin**  
CD  
RPA



**Allen Oke**  
ECD  
Huge



**Jackie Poriadjian-Asch**  
CMO and CRO  
Ecobee



**Jonathan Rouxel**  
Founder, CD  
Prologue AI



**Steve Savic**  
EVP, ECD  
Critical Mass



**Jill Schoolenberg**  
VP & country manager  
GoDaddy

## MEDIA AGENCY OF THE YEAR



**Todd Allen**  
VP, marketing  
Labatt



**Dan Kalinski**  
CEO  
iProspect



**Jodi Peacock**  
SVP, business director  
Mediacom



**Tara Chetkowski**  
Marketing director  
Nestle (Starbucks products)



**Kevin Kivi**  
EVP, general manager  
Horizon Media



**Ann Stewart**  
CEO  
Stewart Consulting



**Genevieve Guay**  
President  
Dentsu X



**Nancy Marcus**  
CMO, North America  
Kruger Products



**Janie Theiriault**  
Director of integrated  
marketing  
Loto-Quebec



**Sarah Ivey**  
Founder  
Agents of Necessity



**Heather Nobes**  
Head of consumer credit  
products marketing  
Visa

## PR AGENCY OF THE YEAR



**Carrie Baker**  
EVP, chief of staff  
Canada Goose



**Kalynn Crump**  
Founder  
Top Shelf PR



**Martine Levy**  
Managing director  
DDB PR



**Jennifer Bell**  
Formerly of LCBO



**Joanne Fletcher**  
CEO  
Mint Green Group (K Swiss)



**Rick Murray**  
Managing partner  
Cohn & Wolfe



**Alicia Carroll**  
Commercial activities &  
events leader  
IKEA



**Braden Hoeppner**  
SVP, marketing  
Herschel



**Laura Serra**  
Group CD  
Mosaic



**Brian Langerfield**  
VP, ECD  
National PR

## SMALL AGENCY OF THE YEAR



**Hesham Aboul-Hassan**  
Head of marketing  
Upfield (Becel)



**Emma Eriksson**  
VP marketing  
General Mills



**Alan Madill**  
Founder, creative  
Good&Ready



**Joel Arbez**  
Freelance Creative  
Formerly of Grey



**Noah Feferman**  
VP, CD  
Citizen Relations



**Lance Martin**  
CCO  
Union



**Nancy Crimi-Lamanna**  
CCO  
FCB Canada



**Matt Hassell**  
CCO  
Forsman & Bodenfors



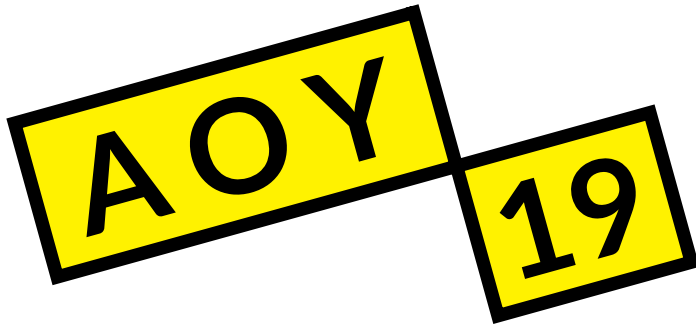
**Leah Zukowski**  
CD  
Flipp



**Jerome Dujoux**  
VP marketing  
Agropur



**Stephen Jurisic**  
Dean  
Miami Ad School



**STRATEGY'S 2019 AGENCY OF THE YEAR AWARDS BEGAN** with an open call for Canadian agencies to submit their best campaigns from the past 12 months. This year also saw the addition of the Small AOY category, inviting independently owned creative shops with 50 employees or less to participate.

All eligible creative, media, digital, PR and design agencies entered with comprehensive campaign, program or project case studies (five for AOY and three for MAOY, DAOY, PRAOY, Design AOY and Small AOY). Separate cross-industry and cross-country jury panels then marked the work online and in isolation.

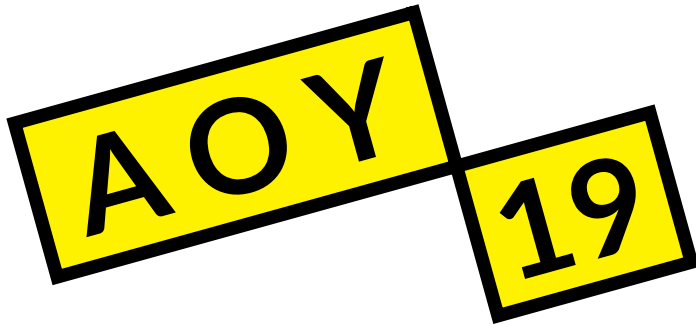
Each campaign for the agency, media and digital competitions was given two marks from one to 10 based on strategy and creativity, while judges scored the PR campaigns using the same criteria, as well as a score for impact. Design was judged on creativity, technical challenge and impact.

Judges with conflicts were omitted from scoring on the applicable cases. The top-scoring agencies made up the shortlists, based on a natural drop-off point in the scoring. Scores were averaged with equal weighting, and the agency with the highest marks was the winner. One case from each category with the highest points was named a Campaign of the Year. The finalists, in winning order, are listed below.

AGENCY	SMALL AGENCY	DESIGN
Rethink	Target	Rethink
BBDO Toronto	123w	Lg2
John St.	Arrivals + Departures	DDB Canada
Ogilvy Canada	Doug&partners	Cossette
Zulu Alpha Kilo	Mixtape	123w
Cossette	Cartier	Leo Burnett
Lg2	The Local Collective	Sid Lee
Sid Lee	Studio M	Zulu Alpha Kilo
FCB Canada	Giants & Gentlemen	McMillan
Anomaly		Ogilvy Canada
Taxi		John St.
Union		Camp Jefferson
Edelman Canada		
The&Partnership		

DIGITAL	MEDIA	PR
FCB Canada	Initiative	Narrative
Rethink	UM Canada	Weber Shandwick Canada
Zulu Alpha Kilo	Touché!	Edelman Canada
BBDO Toronto	PHD Media	The Colony Project
DDB Canada	Cossette Media	Craft Public Relations
Cossette	OMD Canada	MSLGroup
Lg2	Jungle Media	North Strategic
Grip Limited	Media Experts IPG	Veritas Communications
Sid Lee	Mindshare	SwervePR
	Vizeum Canada	Rock-It Promotions
		Citizen Relations





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	Vizeum Canada	Rock-It Promotions
		Citizen Relations

# MARKETING EVOLUTION C-SUITE | 2019

This year's MES explored marketing in the age of disruption, particularly as the role of the CMO expands and building brands for the future becomes imperative. The one-day event was held on October 1 at the Arcadian Court in Toronto, with advisory board chair Deborah Neff from Sephora MCing the conference.



1. Social Lite Vodka's Neetu Godara on how she found a gap in the RTD market and built a high-growth brand amid a sea of competitors. | 2. Sephora's Deborah Neff was the advisory board chair for the conference. | 3. The Arcadian Court set the stage for 14 sessions covering the new role of marketing. | 4. Ad.Vice's Jason Chaney in talks with Tim Hortons' Axel Schwan and Ecobee's Jackie Poriadjian-Asch | 5. One year after recreational pot was made legal, Canopy Growth's Josh Lyon explains what's working and what's still a work-in-progress. | 6. Krissi Milan from Flow Water on how to mainstream an out-of-the-box idea. | 7. Anthony Rossi spills the deets behind Loop's disruptive eco program and how brands are working with the company to reformat their packaging. | 8. MEC's Anne Donohoe on how the retailer is getting ahead of its mistakes to become a leader on the diversity front. | 9. Uwe Struekmann at Loblaw on how to build unignorable brands using a consumer-centric approach to marketing.





## STRATEGY AWARDS | 2019

The gala for the awards took place following MES on October 1, with the 2019 Brands of the Year picking up their trophies, and FCB/Six taking home the Grand Prix for Black & Abroad's "Go Back to Africa."



1. Max Valiquette, chief strategy officer at Diamond, plays the role of funny host. | 2. Strategy Award's foxy trophies, of the Gold variety. | 3. The team at Loblaw raise a toast and flash their matte-black Brand of the Year ball. | 4. Rethink made frequent trips to the stage for its work with IKEA. | 5. Matt Lund delivers the ACA's award for outstanding marketing achievements to Shannon Hosford at MLSE. | 6. It was a good night for FCB/Six – the agency snagged its second Strategy Awards Grand Prix in as many years. | 7. Ritual picked up a Brand of the Year trophy of their own. | 8. The Interac and Zulu Alpha Kilo team with their awards haul for the podcast series *Earning Curve*. | 9. Karine Courtemanche picks up a few medals for Touche! | 10. The New Establishment: Brand title was awarded to the eloquent Danica Nelson from Telus. | 11. The coordinated team at Ecobee with one of the six Brand of the Year trophies. | 12. Strategy Awards jury chair and FCB CSO Shelley Brown.

PHOTOS BY MATT FORSYTHE



## The 2020 Strategy Agency of the Year Longlist

Cossette, Mosaic, North Strategic, Cult, Jacknife, Sherpas Cinema, Concrete, Agency59, Monnet Design, Klick Labs, Faulhaber, Sticks and Stones, 123w, Buoy Marketing + Production, Calder Bateman Communications, Juniper Park/TBWA, Tag, Community Agency, Arrivals + Departures, The Local Collective, Thinkingbox, Target Marketing, Torque Strategies, Koo Multicultural, Anomaly, Swerve, MSL Group, M5 Marketing Communications, Meadus, OMD, Fokkens Rowe, The Met Agency, Forsman & Bodenfors, ASTOUND Group, Paul Long & Partners, Giants & Gentlemen, Weber Shandwick, Swank Media, Citizen Relations, The&Partnership, Hall+Co, OCL Studios, WS, OneMethod, Cundari, Ogilvy Canada, Edelman, Absolu, The Turn Lab, McMillan, ZGM, Believe in, ICF Olson, FULCRUM, Evans Hunt, Slugger Studio, Strike Design Studio, Camden, Studio Dialog, Grassriots, Wavemaker, Balmoral Multicultural Marketing, Tux, Rain, Saatchi & Saatchi, Alfred, Ray Agency, Zip, Alice & Smith, Media Experts, Cleansheet Communications, Grey Canada, Shikatani Lacroix, No Fixed Address, Ruby & Foster, Bleublancrouge, Little Rocket Inc., Tribal Worldwide Canada, Open, Good&Ready, Able Sense, Geometry Global, The Hive, Huge, 6Degrees, AdFarm, doug&partners, Cheil, District Design Co, Lg2, Virtue, Eighty-Eight, Critical Mass, Fuse, DentsuBos, Fig55, BBDO, Les Evades, Giant Ant, Sajak & Farki, Narrative, Vizeum, Blok Design, Diamond, Proof, Wundermam Thompson, FCB Canada, Union, Tank, Zulu Alpha Kilo, Camp Jefferson, Polyester Studio Inc., Guild Studio, Weaymouth Creative, Bits Creative Agency, Bravo Tango Advertising, C&B Advertising, Jackman Reinvents, Dose Media, Jam3, Grip Limited, John St., Gauthier, BIMM, National Public Relations, Art & Mechanical, The Colony Project, DDB Canada, Leo Burnett, Havas Worldwide Canada, Taxi, Underline Studio, GTB, Publicis, Captus Advertising, Central Station, Accomplice Content Supply Co., Mindshare, TouchÈ!, Church + State, Gilbert Li, Venture Communications, Wax, Elemental, Public, SDI Marketing, Independent, Veritas Communications, TAM-TAMTBWA, Daughter, T1, UM Canada, CRITERIUM, Jungle Media, Noise Digital, KWT, Bensimon Byrne, Makespace., R&G Strategic, Trigger, Sid Lee, Camp Pacific, Cartier, K72, McCann Worldgroup Canada, Major Tom, Principal, Barrett and Welsh, Woodruff Sweitzer, Rethink, Wunder

**The playing field is level, what happens next is up to you.**

## Nominate the original thinkers (and doers)

**The New Establishment: Innovators** program is looking for the next crop of junior and mid-level professionals rising through the ranks and making their mark.

**Know someone who created something new?  
Challenged conventions? Triggered big change?  
Nominate them for consideration (and glory)!**

The nominees may come from any side of the industry, any type of agency or partner company, as long as their achievements go far beyond the Day Job territory. They are the individuals whose grit, initiative and accomplishments the industry should know about.

**Nominations open in November.**  
**[newestablishment.strategyonline.ca/innovators](http://newestablishment.strategyonline.ca/innovators)**

# **THE 2020 MARKETING AWARDS**



**Entries open November 5.**

[marketingawards.strategyonline.ca](http://marketingawards.strategyonline.ca)