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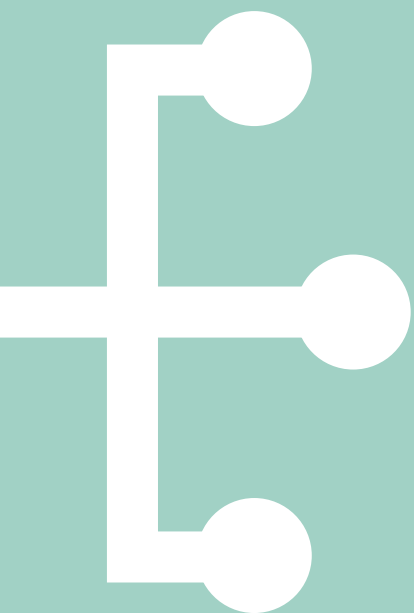


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WHERE TO
FROM HERE?

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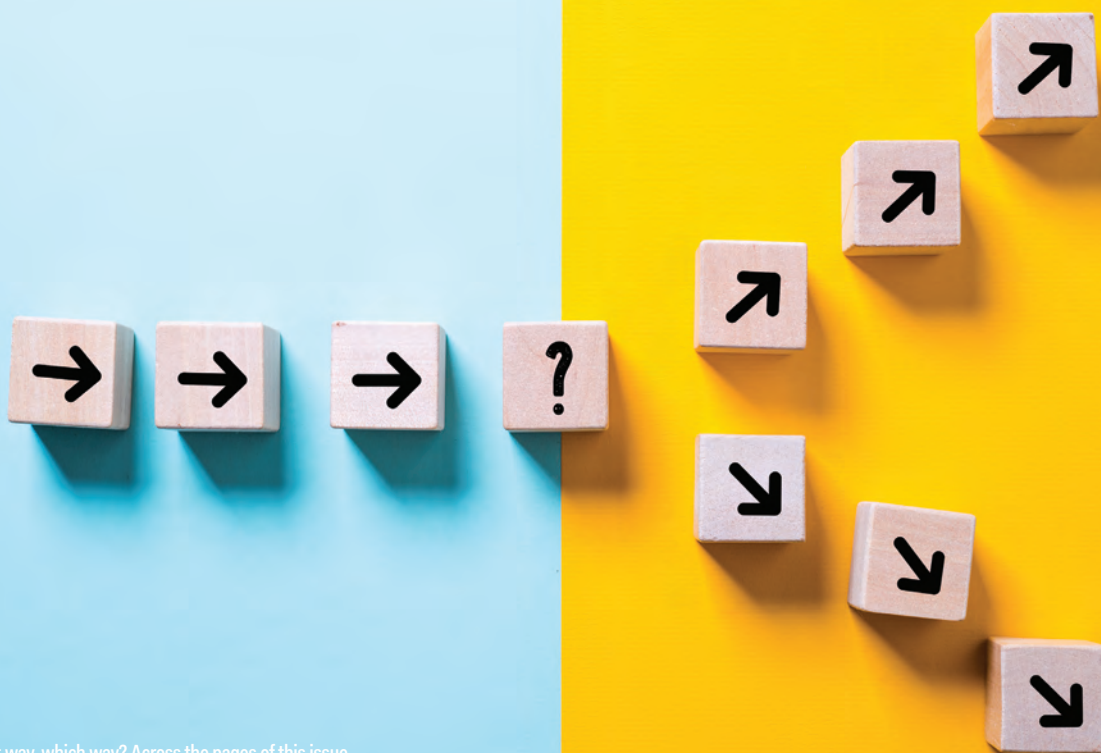
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This way, that way, which way? Across the pages of this issue, *strategy* attempts to help the industry plot the path forward.

10

What Comes Next

Four ad vets make a case for what's ahead, from business tribulations to societal transformations.

14

The Future Consumer

When the economy comes back to life, what new behaviours (and anxieties) will consumers greet marketers with?

19

In This Together

How companies eased feelings of isolation with messages of solidarity. We celebrate those that landed on the right side of history.

4 Editorial The industry's blank canvas • **8 Upfronts** Lessons from Loblaw's Galen Weston on crisis management, as well as China on marketing in recovery, plus some of the medalists at this year's SIA Awards • **22 Roundtable** How the pandemic upended media plans in the works and deepened the disruption wound • **48 Tribute** Celebrating the leaders that put Unilever Canada on the global marketing map • **53 AToMiCon** A look back at the winners and keynoters • **54 Back Page** Zulu's quick fix to bridge the gap



ON THE COVER:

Never did we ever dream of putting a soft, crisp, bleach-white, unravelled roll of toilet paper on our cover. But there it is, making history, turning even the most level-headed person into a closeted hoarder. The precious staple will one day be considered an artifact of the current crisis. So when **Zulu Alpha Kilo** presented a TP cover idea to our editorial team, we jumped on it faster than a panic buyer at Costco. The creative shop's symbolic image and expletive coverline reflects our collective WTF sentiment after two months of lockdowns, layoffs, cancellations and closures. But, dear reader, as you know, this is not the end of the tale. Where you take your brand next promises to make history more than any nonsensical herd behaviour (we hope).

Consumerism, climate and coronavirus

After weeks of going back-to-the-basics, I'm not completely convinced we'll emerge from our sanitized homes unchanged. That's not to say everyone will become rewilders and survivalists; although it wouldn't hurt to know how to build a fire, or at the very least, sourdough starter. But surely the imposed moratorium on non-essentials will rewire our consumer brains, even by some small degree?

I, for one, can feel the auto-pilot switch turning off and my purchases becoming more measured. Some of my self-discoveries during quarantine include: not needing more than five blouses and, sometimes, a pair of sweatpants; realizing it is possible to eat every morsel of food in the fridge; and that my stairwell acts as a cost-free (and physical distancing appropriate) gym alternative.

Consumerism as we know it has been put on pause. We'll eventually return to our old shopping ways, but perhaps some will be given a larger grain of thought.

The shift won't be unfounded. If the experts in this issue are correct (p.14), we could see an acceleration of preexisting consumer trends, such as the desire for brands with an eco bent. If your brand already has a sustainability strategy, you're in luck. If not, now's the time to set the purpose agenda.

While Canada was in peak coronavirus, I spoke with the CMO and the chief strategist at McCann in Asia to get a sense of consumer sentiment there as the economy came out of its coma (p.8). Prior to COVID, they said, sustainability felt like an issue that was being dealt with by Western countries. Now, even older generation Chinese who tend to be more "traditionally minded" are

concerned with the greater good of the world, they told me.

But if you're not convinced the pandemic will spark deeper societal and environmental action and thought, then perhaps look to Amsterdam. Mid-crisis, the city became the first to adopt the "doughnut" model. Dutch policymakers will encourage the financial success of businesses that adopt similar principles as those that are B Corp certified (with two rings of a doughnut representing climate and social issues intertwined). It no longer relies on GDP as the only marker of economic health. According to Quartz, "in adopting this model, which attempts to balance the needs of people without harming the environment, the city hopes to emerge from the cloud of COVID-19 elbows out, with a new purpose."

It's a mighty ballsy and somewhat controversial move, but it just goes to show the kind of fundamental shifts taking place – and we're not even out of the pandemic woods yet.

In a tribute feature (p.48) to Unilever as it turns 90, we look at how 28 of the company's Sustainable Living Brands are growing 68% faster than the rest of its portfolio. Why? Because each one is driven by either boosting Unilever's social impact or depleting its eco footprint. It'll be interesting to see those numbers a year from now. Will our experts be right? Will we emerge with stronger values? And, will we ever be able to give up our sweatpants to return to the office?

Stay tuned. At the pace the world moves today, I'm sure we'll soon find out.

Jennifer Horn, editor



strategy

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Where to from here?

That's the question we're all tackling, at home and at work (currently the same physical space and, despite best efforts, mental space in the absence of a "home from work" mode).

My favourite quote last month came from a CARD media planning story where David Crammond, managing director, investment at MediaCom said, "In terms of what the marketplace is going to be like, I'd be crazy to try to predict right now... I don't even know when I can leave my basement, so how will I know what's going to happen in the fall? We can look at economic models, but it all depends on consumer activity."

Despite all the unknowables, this issue takes a stab at pulling together guidance on how things may change.

As we all went into WFH mode to help flatten the curve, *strategy* joined the ranks of brands making fast decisions about pausing or changing programs.

We cancelled the physical Shopper Marketing Forum (SMF) and refunded delegates, then turned the Shopper Innovation and Activation Awards and SMF into free virtual versions (see the winners reels online, and sign up for the May keynote series).

Hopes of having the Marketing Awards juries physically meet for their final phase of deliberations quickly evolved to Zoom judging, and planning for alternate ways to curate the body of work come June in a week-long virtual reveal. With

pro chairs keeping the experience on point, we've had some of the best sessions ever.

The Marketing Evolution Summit, originally set for September, suddenly seemed safer to move to 2021 as a physical forum, and to focus on sharing C-Suite learning in a distanced mode. And the Strategy Awards, which were underway, are slated to rejoin Agency of the Year (AOY) timing in November.

Daily and weekly plan A, plan B and new plan A changes were plotted, all while covering the tough news cycle in new ways, and supporting collaborative industry efforts via HelpHub and CauseConnect.

Through all of this, everyone's input and ideas have been invaluable and appreciated.

Some of that feedback was on upcoming programs like AOY – whether and how it made sense in 2020. Despite the current crisis, there was a feeling that, by winter, something to celebrate would be welcome, and that the annual best-body-of-work review should not go dark. Even negatively impacted shops felt participating signals moving forward.

So, similar to other national programs recognizing the great work coming out of this market, AOY is moving ahead, but with a scaled back approach.

The consensus was to make it easier to enter. Deadlines have moved back, and for AOY, rather than five campaigns, we're now asking agencies to only enter four

cases. For Media AOY, there will be no case videos, just a written case plus images.

As our focus since March has been diving into how brands are responding to the pandemic, we recognize that celebration is not a priority right now. But the feedback we've received is that sharing the strategies behind campaign pivots has helped other marketers move forward with more confidence, whether it was roundtables in *strategyDaily* and *Media in Canada*, or deeper dives in our *C-Suite*, *Shopper Marketing Report* or *CARD*.

We thank all the agencies and brands that support *strategy* events, which in turn supports the brand's journalism, and allows the majority of our news sites to be free.

Sharing knowledge and work via virtual conferences and awards programs also plays a role akin to the journalism those events support. They aid confidence and move the industry forward by highlighting success stories.

Reminding everyone what we can achieve with the right blend of creativity, insights and strategy is always beneficial, and this year – more than ever – is about much more than bragging rights.

Until then, mm

Mary Maddever
SVP, Editorial Director, Brunico
Publisher, *strategy*, MiC
stimulant, CARD and NLA



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WIN A SIA AWARD? CHECK.

By Justin Dallaire

This is a story about the 2020 Shopper Innovation + Activation award winners.

Above:
The “Simple Check” campaign from No Name and John St. was given the Grand Prix at the SIA Awards show, which took place virtually this year.

No Name’s sarcastic and self-effacing tone – applied to everything from billboards to Twitter posts and news headlines (and in *strategy*’s case, story ledes) – is now as recognizable as the private label’s pared-down yellow-and-black packaging. For No Name, the stark yet consistent tone has become a calling card for the brand across every touchpoint of the path-to-purchase.

The SIA jury awarded the “Simple Check” campaign by John St. with the Grand Prix medal. It’s worth mentioning that, last year, another Loblaw brand – No Frills – walked away with the top prize, also alongside John St.

“Simple Check” also earned a Gold at the SIAs, which was developed by *strategy* to highlight the best activation, experiential and shopper marketing programs from 2019. This year’s 14-person jury was co-chaired by Loblaw’s Cheryl Grishkewich and Unilever’s Gina Kiroff.

Other big winners included Rethink – which picked up five Golds between campaigns for the Government of Ontario, Earth Paws Pet Products, Kraft Heinz and WestJet – and Cossette – which earned four Golds for McDonald’s Raptors sponsorship play and its “Friends Wanted” hiring blitz. Meanwhile, work for PepsiCo Foods and Mars Wrigley pushed BBDO Toronto to the top of the podium on three occasions.

Last year, the Shopper Innovation + Activation Awards were rebranded, giving the program a deeper activation lens.

This year, in light of the concerns and restrictions of COVID-19, more changes were in store. Instead of a gala, the industry was treated to a virtual “grand reveal” in April, with *strategy* taking to social media with celebratory showreels of the winning brands and agencies.

The full cases can be found on the SIA site, along with video content celebrating each and every winner.

MARKETING IN RECOVERY

By Jennifer Horn

Just as China had begun to reawaken its economy in late March, Canada was entering its own pandemic-induced coma. The country is weeks behind China on the COVID curve and many are looking to the recovery-stage market for clues on what to expect next.

Indeed, the countries’ culture, politics, societies and economies are different – but the human experience of living through a pandemic is universally the same.

Uncertainty during a crisis breeds panic and fear. In response, we saw brands in Canada and China communicate with empathy and support during the outbreak phase. Companies reassured people that this, too, shall pass. Retailers shared the measures they were taking to keep people safe and supply chains moving.

Soon, when Canadians start to emerge from their homes, brand messaging could shift from



reassurances to rallying cries as companies try to kickstart the economy, Jessica Davey, CMO of McCann Worldgroup Asia Pacific tells *strategy* on a call in April.

Based in Singapore, Davey had just presented case studies from her Chinese clients to the Canadian arm of the global network. In them, brands were shown taking a pull-up-our-sleeves approach, encouraging citizens to rebuild the economy by simply living their lives.

Commercials from payment platform Alipay, for example, applauded people for returning to their daily lives in reawakened cities, while celebrating “City Life Week” and partnering with businesses to encourage shopping by offering discounts through Alipay’s platform.



Suzanne Zhang, CSO for McCann in China also pointed to Baidu, one of the world's largest tech companies that's based in Beijing, as a brand that's offering "utility and practical ways" to help people get back to "normal life." Baidu created the #CitiesAreAwakening campaign, with updates on restaurants and stores as they gradually opened. "We're also seeing a trend in brands playing a more supportive role in enabling people to feel more emotionally positive in the long-term," she says.

Canada's brands, however, may have a harder time driving consumer spending. A McKinsey report from April shows that 55% of Chinese consumers were optimistic about an economic recovery post-pandemic – versus just 20% of Canadians.



Nielsen also reports that, because of wage and income support being slow to take effect, consumer confidence in Canada may be lower than in other parts of the world.

However, Davey and Zhang suggest brands drive purchase behaviour by celebrating the new rituals that were picked up while



Above: China's Alipay and Baidu promote optimism and encourage shopping post-outbreak. Could we see similar messaging in Canada during the recovery phase?

sheltering-in-place, from better hygiene and online shopping to reading and exercising.

"A lot of the brands that are resonating with consumers are being quite open about the fact that this is a journey," says Davey.

"They're getting back to work, and getting products back on the shelves, but they're not saying 'It's business as usual.'... Things shifted in society that won't shift back. And those that are winning are saying, 'Different things matter to you now that didn't matter three months ago, and we're listening.'"



LEADING IN A CRISIS

By Chris Lombardo

It's rare for a crisis to affect every brand at once. And at the outset of the pandemic, many CEOs responded with similar messaging – both in the measures they were taking to flatten the curve, and in promoting a sense of "togetherness" while being apart.

But what made Galen Weston, executive chairman of Loblaw Companies Limited, truly stand out from other company heads – as they all released a salvo of email communications in the early stages – was his personal, human approach.

"It was like he was talking to people individually," says David Kincaid, founder and managing partner at Level5 Strategy. "The thing that really impressed me was he was one of the first corporate leaders to actually try to engage Canadians – and I say Canadians, not shoppers or Loblaw loyalists – with reassuring leadership messages."

Loblaw owns the largest privately held database in the country, PC Optimum, which Weston used to affirm the company's brand vision and identity, while offering comfort and reassurance to concerned customers.

He did this by admitting to current (and future) fulfilment issues at stores and also by acknowledging the importance of keeping the sick and vulnerable top of mind. Weston signed off each message with "Be kind."

The executive also admitted to needing more staff to cope with increased demand and that they would be properly compensated, which galvanized the industry to follow suit and increase hourly wages. On April 1, Weston wrote: "I know there are some really long lines at the cash registers in certain stores as we try to manage social distancing. Right now, we are looking for some solutions to help ease that congestion. So, hang in there."

Weston has been successful in connecting with consumers because his messaging is based off of the company's vision statement, "Live Life Well," supporting the needs of Canadians by improving their health and wellbeing, says Kincaid.

Once COVID-19 hit, Loblaw "didn't change the vision, they reinterpreted it and that, strategically, is the spine of any great brand."

WHAT COMES NEXT



ONE CAN OFTEN FIND MEANING IN DIFFICULT TIMES. WE ASKED ADVERTISING LEADERS TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON WHAT WE CAN LEARN NOW TO PREPARE FOR WHAT COMES NEXT.

EMERGING STRONGER, MORE CREATIVE AND SCRAPPYER THAN EVER

BY ZAK MROUEH

It's human nature to want certainty in our personal and professional lives. In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, it's impossible to have.

What I can say is, just like every defining moment, we'll search for meaning. Our eyes have been jolted wide open to what matters. People have come together in ways never imagined. There are silver linings that point to a path forward for our business.

I discovered that COVID-19 was about to hit a crisis point while away with my family in March. That morning I planned to turn my cell phone off but took one last peek. I then learned the gravity of the escalating situation back home.

After scrambling to organize an emergency conference call, we decided to close Zulu's office immediately. It was Thursday, March 12. Looking back, the speed of that decision was critical.

I booked us return flights the next day and started working on COVID-19 briefs from home. With our partners at Tim Hortons, we collaborated on work that went to market in record time. For Subaru, our now virtual agency created one of the first tributes to frontline workers within 24 hours. It was instantly approved and on air at lightning speed. Days later, the brand was flooded with grateful calls and emails.

Our industry can act with incredible speed and agility, so why don't we always? In normal times, we tend to overthink things. As one of Zulu's most successful clients told me years before this crisis, "Our secret weapon is we make decisions together faster than our competition."

As March payroll approached, I decided to stop taking a salary. The next day, my executive team voluntarily took a significant reduction in their own pay. My wife and I were teary as they offered it up.

During an all-staff video call a week later, I got choked up again as I outlined the magnitude of what the entire

industry was facing. For the first time in Zulu history, we had to lay off some of our staff. We shared the reasons and all the protective financial measures we had taken to ensure we would come out of this strong.

It was the toughest moment of my career. I was horrified by how this news would go over. But the response was overwhelmingly empathetic. Several staff at various levels volunteered to take pay cuts of their own. Being transparent and allowing ourselves to be vulnerable has brought our agency closer together, just as it has our relationships with clients who have opened up about their business realities.

Through this, I've realized that good news is easy to share, but bad news is vital to share. In a post-COVID world, companies that embrace a deeper level of transparency will retain more staff, attract the best talent and have thriving cultures.

Those cultures won't have to exist in a physical workplace. They'll exist in the people. The fact that our agency's camaraderie is stronger now despite a displaced workforce has challenged my belief in our need for conventional office space.

Working remotely has forced us to build better resourcing systems overnight. We have daily Capacity Reports for every discipline and person at Zulu. Not only creative. We know exactly who's busy, needs help, and has bandwidth to pitch in. It is a tool we'll be keeping permanently.

To thrive in the new economy, we'll all need to be as efficient and productive as we were while away from our offices. And continue to be flexible about where and how we work.

This time apart has reminded me what I love about the industry and who it's always been about: people. They'll go above and beyond when you least expect it. The adage "your most valuable asset goes up and down the elevator every night" couldn't be more relevant than it is today. The companies that value this will emerge stronger, more creative and scrappier than ever.

TO THRIVE IN THE
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BE AS EFFICIENT AND
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WERE WHILE AWAY
FROM OUR OFFICES.



ZAK MROUEH is
founder and CCO/CEO at
Zulu Alpha Kilo

HOW THE ECONOMIC RESET WILL BRING A RETURN TO HUMANITY

BY TONY CHAPMAN

M

ae Mary Bellevance, my mother, was born in 1930, on a small farm outside of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. For the first ten years of her life, during the Great Depression, her family struggled to survive.

As a result, my mother learned to be resilient, resourceful, thrifty and creative. She married my father, had four kids, but continued to battle the unfairness of life. She took on the responsibility of keeping a roof over our head, as my dad was bipolar. This tireless woman found time to sew most of our clothes, invent board games, and put something under the tree.

Her resilience, resourcefulness, thriftiness and creativeness was passed on to me, and in turn, I passed some of Mae Mary Bellevance to my kids.

The Great Depression was 90 years ago, yet it continues to make an impression. I believe the coronavirus pandemic will have the same lasting impression on humanity: it will have a significant emotional and economic reset on how we think and behave as individuals and as organizations.

That's a good thing.

We spent the last two decades feeding at the trough of entitlement, with individuals and governments borrowing trillions on the backs of future generations to pay for our insatiable appetite for more.

Politicians claimed power by feathering partisan nests. Unions thought nothing of striking the spirit of impressionable youth. In capitalism, leaders established their worth at tens of millions of dollars, hedge fund managers, and new economy capitalists billions more. Sports stars paraded their massive signings. Public service workers fortified their guaranteed pensions and jobs at a time where many working in the private sector were standing on shifting sand with growing uncertainty and insecurity.

Well, the times are a-changing and my advice to you is to accept and embrace a new normal.

Entitlement will give way to resilience.

Me will have to become we.

The haves will give back to the have-nots.

Jobs will be treasured. Strikes will be throttled.

Public services will get a fair deal, that is fair to all.

Education will be fluid and entice and pursue the learner versus force curriculums on a protected path.

Companies will need a higher purpose than profit, and brands will need to narrowcast. Less meaningless line extension, packaging waste, and flair.

Leaders will earn the emotional rewards that come from a turnaround, and steering ship in a storm, versus financial rewards engineered through stock buybacks and other balance sheet engineering.

Automation that sacrifices human work, simply

MY CHOICE IS TO LEAP
INTO THE RENAISSANCE
OF HUMAN CREATIVITY
AND INGENUITY THAT
WILL ERUPT AS SILOS
AND BUREAUCRACY
GET JACKHAMMERED
AWAY.



for profit, will be considered the same as a company dumping pollutants.

And you and me, we will choose to either make it happen or watch and wonder what happened.

My choice is to leap into the renaissance of human creativity and ingenuity that will erupt as silos and bureaucracy get jackhammered away. Less is more, small is big. I don't need a shipping lane or to be part of an existing supply chain. I can link to anyone through the clouds.

The values that my mother taught me - to be resilient, resourceful, thrifty and creative - will do well in this coming reinvention. My only regret is not being twenty again, to realize the emotional rewards of humanity working once again, together.



TONY CHAPMAN is
the founder of Tony
Chapman Reactions

HITTING THE RESTART BUTTON WITH ADVERTISING

BY JOHN BRADLEY AND CARRIE BRADLEY

New habits and brand loyalties are being forged while much of the world is in lockdown – and they’re not being driven by advertising. But it’s not just consumers who are being changed by all of this. So are brands and their corporate masters, massively and irreversibly so. Company balance sheets, cash reserves and P&Ls have never been so challenged. And ad budgets are taking a massive hit as a result.

The *New York Times* reported that in March, U.S. ad spend was down by 38% to 51%, depending on which medium; *Marketing Week* reported that 90% of U.K. marketers have had their budgets delayed or reviewed away; Diageo announced a halt to all spend that “will not be effective” (although we wonder why it took a global pandemic to trigger that decision.)

It would be folly to assume this money will still be there when matters improve.

Advertising budget allocations were already tough to secure in the archaic-seeming pre-COVID world, but, in the post-pandemic world, budgets you thought were in the bag are going to have to be won again, from scratch, against a very long list of other more expensive and more urgent company priorities.

The good news is that advertisers and marketers have a secret weapon in proving their worth. So secret, in fact, that most agencies and brands are not even aware of it. And it is this: when advertising hits the mark, it generates far more business value than anyone realizes or takes credit for. Now, more than ever, is the time to demonstrate track records in value creation.

There is a test you can do to demonstrate this value. It’s simple. Take a previous successful campaign that your agency worked on, and ask these two questions:

“What would have happened without this campaign?”
This is the non-technical description of the “Do

WHEN
ADVERTISING
HITS THE MARK,
IT GENERATES
FAR MORE
BUSINESS
VALUE THAN
ANYONE
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TAKES CREDIT
FOR.


Nothing” scenario. If sales are going down prior to the campaign, project the trend forward through and beyond the campaign period and use that as the baseline to compare campaign results. We have seen this simple approach quadruple the value generated by campaigns versus the previous comparison point of what sales were at the start of the campaign.

“What else changed in the business as a result of the campaign achieving its stated goals?”

Most businesses are highly complex, inter-related, finely-tuned machines. Change one variable, such as sales, or customer satisfaction, and many other variables change as a consequence. For example, while telcos compete primarily for new subscribers, some campaigns aimed

at doing that have also increased the satisfaction of existing customers, which translates into upticks in soft brand measures. That’s usually the end of the story. But happier customers complain less, which means resources in call centres can be cut back or redeployed into proactive sales roles, which makes for happier call centre colleagues, which reduces turnover, which reduces recruitment and training costs, and so on. This domino effect of positive changes directly resulting from the campaign has a value that can be measured, or at least estimated.

Winning back advertising spend in a post-COVID Darwinian world of corporate reconstruction will not be easy. But, if you can provide positive answers to the two questions above, you’ll be much better able to demonstrate – in terms the CFO and CEO can understand – your track record as a value creator.

Quite simply, if you want to be taken seriously as part of the post-COVID solution, you need to get serious about proving the value you generate. 



JOHN BRADLEY is president at John Bradley Agency Effectiveness



CARRIE BRADLEY is senior partner at John Bradley Agency Effectiveness



WHO IS THE

POST-PANDEMIC

CONSUMER ?

**CORONAVIRUS DERAILED THE BUSINESS WORLD AND TRANSFORMED CONSUMERS OVERNIGHT.
WHICH TRENDS WILL OUTLIVE THE BIGGEST HEALTH CRISIS OF OUR TIME?**

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

In the weeks that followed Canada's first confirmed case of COVID-19 on Jan. 27, the virus that swept the globe, overwhelming health-care systems and decimating economies, began to transform consumer behaviour.

Shelves emptied as shoppers rushed to stockpile essentials such as canned goods, toilet paper, disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer. A new reality took hold as authorities suspended most, and then all, gatherings: conferences, sports leagues, even the Olympics. Travel restrictions escalated, grounding planes and upending vacation plans. As families waited days for grocery deliveries, others nervously lined storefronts in demarcated single files. Millions of jobs vanished in a matter of weeks, while non-essential workers were ordered to stay home. The country braced for a vicious cycle as consumer spending fell and businesses closed, necessitating more layoffs.

To consumers, the trauma of a global health crisis is akin to having your country suddenly transformed into a warzone, says Johanna Faigelman, a cultural anthropologist and CEO of Human Branding, in April. "The boundaries and constraints of what my world is and what I'm entitled to and what I need have all been drastically reduced, as well as reprioritized and reevaluated."

Around the world, the pandemic has resulted in significant, short-term shifts in consumer spending. Countless reports have attempted to capture consumer attitudes at specific moments of the crisis, revealing developing trends but failing to predict the future with any degree of accuracy. Unclear is which trends will subside once COVID-19 is under control, and which will have permanently imprinted themselves on Canadians' psyche.

Past upheavals, from the global influenza pandemic of 1918 to the 2008 financial crisis, offer important clues. Then again, in scope and impact, few compare to COVID-19, which has imperiled everyone from celebrities and politicians to grandparents and retail workers.

The realities of the digital age and the sheer volume of information – and misinformation – available at consumers' fingertips have heightened anxieties, shaping behaviour in unexpected ways. "No society has been at this stage in its technological and information sharing development ever, with this kind of crisis at our hands," says Faigelman. "We all know too much about it at all times. We're all sitting back in our homes, thinking about it twenty-four-seven."

At the time of writing, Canada was in the fifth of six consumer behaviour thresholds identified by Nielsen, a phase known as "restricted living." Only China had entered stage six – a new normal – characterized by a gradual return of daily routines, renewed health practices, and changes in shopping behaviour. But with governments warning of periodic outbreaks over the next year and beyond, the future has never felt more uncertain.

Almost everything has been predicted by one pundit or another: from the collapse of consumerism to a v-shaped return to business as usual. Agreeing with other experts that spoke with *strategy*, Faigelman believes we're experiencing a temporary acceleration of societal trends that were

"already percolating in all our minds." Hyper-localization, DIY culture, health and wellness, online shopping and remote working will accelerate, though perhaps only modestly when taking the long view.

A RETURN TO BASICS

In the midst of a crisis, humans resort to basics. Consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs, first posited in 1943, which dictates people must fulfill their fundamental needs, such as food and safety, before forging into more grandiose pursuits. Our survival instincts kick in; reusable mugs are shelved for the reassurance of single-use cups.

The once-boundless world contracts, becoming the size of a person's neighbourhood or condo, says Faigelman. Basic consumerist assumptions, such as the ubiquitous availability of toilet paper, are swept away. In their place, a desire to be self-sufficient takes root. Back to baking, sewing, DIY. No more relying on relatives, maintenance workers, Uber drivers. "You suddenly have to do things for yourself that you thought you'd never have to think about again."

This shift is felt most strongly among the categories that intersect with the necessities of life, namely food and beverage and health and wellness.

Early on in the crisis, panicked consumers frantically purchased shelf-stable products that would keep their families nourished: soups, oats, pulses and proteins, dried beans and legumes, pastas, frozen fruit, alternative dairy products and powdered milk. Two weeks into the state of emergency, 60% of consumers reported suddenly buying more foods and beverages, according to Kathy Perrotta, VP market strategy and understanding at Ipsos. She says even millennials, defying demographic trends, were buying more non-perishable and frozen foods.





In states of emergency, foods that hold symbolic and emotional power tend to undergo a resurgence, according to Faigelman. People cling to higher-fat, staple foods that help them feel fulfilled. Some research suggests consumers, craving comfort, swap the calories typically consumed in QSRs and cafes with small indulgences at home.

"There's nothing that makes you feel better when you're freaking out and suffering than a chocolate chip cookie or a warm loaf of bread or a nice bowl of pasta," says Faigelman. "The foods that give us the most pleasure, that are the most sustaining... those are the foods that we're currently seeking and that are going to experience a resurgence in popularity and interest even after the crisis is over."

"THE FOODS THAT GIVE US THE MOST PLEASURE... THOSE ARE THE FOODS THAT ARE GOING TO EXPERIENCE A RESURGENCE... EVEN AFTER THIS CRISIS IS OVER."

This trend towards higher-carb diets may suggest consumers are being less mindful of their health, but that's not the case, notes Perrotta. Not only does nutrition become a fundamental consideration during difficult times, but consumers increasingly consider

the energy-fueling, stress-reducing and immune-boosting wellness benefits of their food and beverage purchases.

During the 2008 financial crisis, adults in the U.S. (where the crisis was most severe) showed greater concern for nutrition while shopping for groceries, according to the USDA. By 2010, more adults were likely to rate their own diet as excellent, very good or good, compared to before the crisis began.

"A lot of people have said to me, 'Yeah, but economically, if people are in a more compromised economic state, they're going to go for value and they're not going to focus on their health,'" says Perrotta. "I don't agree. It's going to be some combination of both."

In addition to cooking more at home, consumers will continue seeking

products that are locally sourced – a factor often tied to perceptions of quality and wellness, according to Perrotta. Over the last year, 17% of Canadians said they consumed more local food and beverage products, up 4% from 2017. The outbreak is likely going to accelerate that trend, she says, as local products meet additional consumer needs – such as comfort, quality, stress relief – and make them feel good about their choices.

In March, research by IMI International examining the impact of COVID-19 on consumer choices showed 58% of Canadians were much more likely to purchase made-in-Canada products in the coming months, versus those made in the U.S. (28%) or in China (8%). Twenty-nine percent were more likely to buy from a Canadian farm (and 10% from a local farm), with 21% saying the same about any product made in their city.

A TEMPORARY COGNITIVE SHIFT

With Canadians finding themselves confined to their homes, many experts and reports predict COVID-19 will accelerate digital and tech adoption.

"All age ranges will be impacted by the flood of virtual experiences," predicts agency Bensimon Byrne in a report examining the 18 months following the pandemic. "Though likely to be initiated by tech-savvy Gen Zers, soon all ages will find a virtual experience that aligns with their interests, no matter how obscure."

As Canadians went into self-isolation, many maintained their relationships through digital means. In April, a report by Edelman's Trust Barometer found 84% of people wanted companies to help them stay emotionally connected during the pandemic. The same percentage wanted brands to help foster community and social interactions. Gyms began offering free at-home group fitness classes, dating app Bumble launched "virtual dating" features, and beer brands hosted at-home, virtual happy hours with friends and family.

For convenience and safety, consumers turned to at-home grocery delivery and click-and-collect to allay the fears of venturing into stores –

Top left and previous page: Consumer behaviour took an interesting turn during the quarantine stage of the coronavirus pandemic. There was a sudden fixation on bread, self-reflective practices and, strangely, toilet paper hoarding.

“[CATEGORIES ARE] PROPELLED BY GIANT TRENDS OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR... A BIT OF A CROSS-BREEZE DOESN'T REALLY CHANGE THEM.”

research by Dalhousie University found that 47% of people were avoiding grocery stores as of March 23, up from 18% on March 3 – resulting in a surge in grocery ecommerce.

By the end of March, orders placed through Loblaw's PC Express had more than doubled, Walmart was receiving four-times the amount of online orders, and demand had jumped 150% at Instacart, according to the Globe and Mail. All three companies went on hiring sprees to meet demand. Meanwhile, smaller local retailers, including Toronto's Fresh City Farms and Fresh from the Farm, either halted grocery delivery or stopped accepting new customers due to overwhelming demand.

Older, more vulnerable people are among those shopping online, many for the first time, which could signal potential for growth once the pandemic is under control. Some experts predict convenience will keep customers coming back. In China, the online grocery market is expected to surge by 63% this year, more than double the 29% growth seen in 2019, according to data from iiMedia Research released in March.

But, Deloitte's Duncan Stewart points out that long-term adoption will depend on user experience, which, due to the sheer volume of orders, has not been seamless.

Customers face out-of-stock products, long wait times, higher prices (due to delivery fees and fewer promotions), and perishable foods they feel are less fresh than what's available in store.

Stewart, who is the director of research for Technology, Media and Telecommunications at Deloitte, searched for a historical precedent to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on tech adoption. He found one in the global influenza pandemic of 1918-1920, which infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide, killing at least 50 million of them.

The world's response to that health crisis was similar to the current one, including mandated closures and restricted travel. Several technologies, including telephones, stoves, electricity and cars, were early in their adoption cycles, comparable to mobile devices and streaming services today.

Examining growth trends across a number of sectors during and after the 1918 crisis, Stewart believes it led to “few or no significant permanent changes in consumer behaviour.” In almost every case, growth trends returned to their pre-pandemic trajectories within a year or two.

Automobile, electricity and telephone adoption all dropped very slightly over the course of the pandemic, returning to their previous growth trends soon afterwards. In short, Stewart says, the health crisis appears to have had little effect on consumers' desire to adopt potentially life-saving technologies.

Having a telephone, for example, meant

being able to connect with others and complete tasks from the safety of home. ““Hey, honey, let's get a phone, because then we will be safer when the next terrible virus comes around.' Doesn't that make sense to you? It didn't happen. It didn't even come close to happening.”

Fast-forward to COVID-19 and sales of desktops, laptops and related tech have surged as millions of people work from home. By the end of March, video streaming was up 20% to 70% across platforms from a month prior, according to one estimate. But within a year or two, Stewart expects their previous pre-pandemic growth trends to resume.

CONSUMER TRENDS TO WATCH

While no one has a crystal ball to predict a post-pandemic world, many have sure tried. Here are a few trends that may (or may not) define a new normal.

Socially distanced travel Toronto's Blackjet believes remote destinations with clean air and big open space could attain luxury status as people avoid crowded cities and hotels. New opportunities may emerge in RVing, while consumers push the travel sector to rethink space and air quality on planes and trains. Whereas the 9/11 attacks changed air travel safety procedures, agency Bensimon Byrne says COVID-19 may instigate a “re-evaluation of global sanitation standards and procedures.”

Sterilized society and at-home healthcare Consumers will seek out products to boost their immune systems, as well as personal hygiene and household care products, states U.K.-based research firm FMCG Gurus. To remain healthy and fit at home, Nielsen found that Chinese consumers have “embarked on a buying spree of smart health products,” and are purchasing or plan to buy air purifiers, water purifiers and smart fitness bracelets at rates of 90%, 93% and 77%. In addition to new smart-health solutions, Bensimon Byrne says remote care and treatment tools may become commonplace.

Luxury reimagined Unable to indulge in global travel and urban experiences due to social distancing and border closures, high-income earners may look for new ways to signal their status, says Bensimon Byrne. Many may spend money on big-ticket purchases or plan “lavish staycations in their own cities and provinces.” Blackjet projects the impact may be greater still: flashy goods could fall out of favour as disposable income shrinks and as there's an “unsavoury perception of extreme wealth in a time when most are struggling.”

Renewed privacy concerns In countries such as China, South Korea and even Canada, governments and agencies have used GPS data to track movements and measure how well citizens are respecting social distancing. As a result, WGSN predicts consumer privacy concerns may grow: “Expect increased levels of consumer interrogation into the data that is being held on them and how it is being used.”

Right: Fashion retailers, like Aritzia, geared their messaging to speak to the realities of life in lockdown.

These categories tend to be “propelled by giant trends of consumer behaviour... and demographics,” he says. “A little bit of a cross-breeze doesn’t really change them much... Even a pandemic doesn’t do it.”

A REDEFINED HOME (AND WORKPLACE)

Strict travel restrictions and work-from-home policies have inspired consumers to reconsider their physical environments, says Faigelman.

During sustained periods of staying in, the desire to improve our surroundings comes into sharp focus, overriding other consumer needs.

“I may have 100 pairs of shoes in my closet. That’s not actually making me feel better right now,” says Faigelman. “What would make me feel better would be a really cozy blanket that I could lie on my couch with.”

In times of crisis, the home takes on even greater meaning, becoming our primary source of safety, comfort and shared family experiences, she says. Over the short- and long-term, brands should expect a resurgence of “anything to do with decorating or cocooning or making things more comfortable or suitable in your home.”

A refocus on the home, and the creature comforts found within, impacts entire categories, from hygiene and beauty to clothing and fitness. As China grappled with the outbreak, sales of yoga mats, pajamas and kitchen accessories experienced a boost, while discretionary spending on clothes, cosmetics, skincare and furniture dipped, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.

At the height of the Canadian crisis, fashion brands tapped into consumers’ desire for comfy, work-appropriate attire. Aritzia used quarantine-worthy TV shows to promote “fave styles inspired by your watch list” like sweatshirts that don’t need “laundering” (*Ozark*); Lululemon curated WFH-friendly yoga pants and tees in its marketing; while intimates brand Knix invited women to “work from home like a boss” in a new line of loungewear essentials.

Meanwhile, on social, Canadians shared their decisions to forgo deodorant and showering. Google searches for lipsticks, mascaras, eyeliners and concealers dropped between 30% and 45% in March, according to Reprise data, while aspirational searches for beauty looks and ideas spiked by a respective 121% and 28%. Consumers showed interest in homemade dry shampoo, lip balm and deodorant, as DIY skincare solutions on Pinterest jumped 102%.

Whether these trends persist will depend on the future of work in the post-pandemic era. It’s likely consumers will resume their social lives, sparking a resurgence in some of the categories hardest hit by COVID-19, such as restaurants and live entertainment. On the other hand, more widespread flexible work-from-home policies post-COVID could precipitate lasting change in a number of areas, including fashion, food and beauty.

Many working professionals structure their lives around their morning commutes and in downtown cores. If remote working becomes the norm, people would likely cook more (instead of eating out), dress differently (paying less attention to their wardrobe) and rethink their beauty routines (taking breaks from products). They may not need cars, or daily access

“I DON’T BELIEVE THE LESSONS WILL GO AWAY FAST. NOT BECAUSE WE’RE ALL SO ENLIGHTENED, BUT BECAUSE THEY WERE ALREADY TENETS OF SOCIETAL CHANGE.”



THE ONE WHERE WE ALL STAY INSIDE

Channeling Rachel Green until further notice.

to transit. They don’t necessarily order takeout for lunch or visit the mall on their breaks. In short, people who work from home live fundamentally different lives from those who don’t.

As of 2017, 11% of Canadian business people reported working remotely all week, according to Regus Canada, while 39% said they mostly work from home. If the number of full-time remote workers grows to half the working population or more, Stewart believes the world will be a different place. On the other hand, “if it goes back to more-or-less what we did before, my prediction is that things will go back to as they were before.”

There are reasons to doubt an epoch-defining shift will take place in the wake of COVID-19. To an extent, government-dictated work-from-home policies have revealed their feasibility during normal times. However, long-term office leases and other work-related costs will likely prevent employers from implementing them, notes Stewart. More importantly, the experts suggest consumers will crave the human interaction workplaces provide. “Human contact is what this entire world is built upon,” says Faigelman. “We will seek that out again, even in the workplace.”

Canadians will likely emerge from COVID-19 having experienced “unconscious epiphanies,” but they’ll be rooted in already-existing societal shifts, says Faigelman. She believes people will continue to question the purpose of accumulating material goods, or the necessity of leisure and business travel and its impact on the health of the planet.

“I don’t believe the lessons being learned now will go away fast,” she says, “not because we’re such great people and we’re all so enlightened, but because we’ve been forced into it and they were already tenets of societal change.”



WE MUST
STAND
ALONE...
TO WIN
TOGETHER!

A CELEBRATION OF CORPORATE KINDNESS

Did you know that the “caremongering” trend – an online movement where people do good deeds for thy neighbour during the pandemic – began in Canada? And that our very own Telus is ranked #1 on DidTheyHelp.com, a global viral site that lists corporations and public figures in “hero” and “zero” leaderboards, based on how they’ve acted during the crisis? (Loblaw is tied with N.Y. Gov. Andrew Cuomo at #4 on the site run by a worldwide team of editors.) We’re a nation of givers, with a culture of kindness. And we expect nothing more from the brands we buy. In fact, Edelman’s Trust Barometer reports 90% of people want them to do everything in their power to put people ahead of profits. Here’s how some Canadian companies are doing just that.

BY JENNIFER HORN

MOBILIZING SUPPLIES

We’re in a war with coronavirus. Frontline workers are our troops and, much like wars of the 20th century, the mobilization of a defense system allows us to plan for the ultimate surprise attack – a vaccine.

It didn’t take long for businesses and individuals to rush in when governments put out calls to produce medical equipment and PPE for Canada’s battle against the virus. In Ontario alone, between March 21 and April 11, more than 14,000 manufacturers and entrepreneurs offered to build new or retool facilities to create critical supplies.

Over the last two months, we saw fashion brands – from small to more established players with manufacturing facilities in Canada such as Frank & Oak and Harry Rosen – sewing face masks out of discarded materials, like shirts and ties. Some apparel brands manufactured and sourced surgical gowns, including Arc’teryx (promising 30,000 coveralls in B.C.), Canada Goose (10,000 scrubs in Toronto and Winnipeg) and Stanfield’s (a whopping 2.6 million gowns in Nova Scotia and across Canada).

Intimate clothing brand Knix, on the other hand, looked to get PPE into hospitals, stat. Instead of finding or reorganizing supply chains through the government, which would have taken additional time, Knix rallied Canadians to help raise funds for the ordering of masks, gowns and gloves to be delivered directly to hospitals through its own suppliers. In just four weeks, the brand raised \$210,000 through GoFundMe. Jaguar Land Rover Canada took a similar route, asking Canadians to donate any of their unused supplies to “#ThePPEDrive.” The brand dispatched teams to collect the goods, driving them directly to hospitals in a fleet of Land Rovers.

Spinmaster and CCM are making face shields, with the game developer repurposing headbands from its popular *Headbanz* board game and donating 200,000 to healthcare workers. The sports equipment company created 500,000 “full

IMAGE: WAYNE REUBEN AND HENDERSON BREWING

Top to bottom: Breweries, like Labatt, mass produce hand sanitizers, while CCM kits medical staff with protective hoods and Harry Rosen joins the likes of apparel brands making masks and other PPE.

head protective hoods" and is inviting manufacturers to access its open source assembly instructions to speed up production.

And finally, hand sanitizer was developed and packaged in retooled factories of L'Oreal Canada, alongside La Roche-Posay as part of its "Coronavirus Solidarity Plan." Labatt Breweries, J.P. Wiser's and Spirit of York also joined the likes of brewers and distillers that pivoted manufacturing to feed a diminished supply of the virus-killing gel.

BANDING TOGETHER

Nothing brings rivals together like a pandemic.

"The priorities in business have been clearly established when Coke and Pepsi come together for a greater cause," said Ron Tite, founder of Church+State in a LinkedIn post about the conglomerates standing together – their logos an inch apart on an image for the "Great American Takeout" campaign to support the restaurant industry.

"Their rivalry may run deep but their support of the greater good runs deeper."

Here in Canada, competitors are also saving themselves by saving each other. In April, a coalition of Quebec brands, 19 in total, chose collaboration over competition to build a movement around "buying local."

Led by Lg2, the network of cross-category brands, from Aliments du Québec and Boréale to Ricardo Media and Producteurs de lait du Québec pooled their marketing dollars to create a campaign that highlighted local companies. In ads, Quebecers were encouraged by a business owner to purchase products of another, creating a chain of entrepreneurs supporting each other.

Strange brand-fellows have also been working arm-in-arm to either deliver essential goods to those who need or to keep their employees safe.

Pizza Pizza delivery vans were seen toting boxes of protective gear from Knix to shelters across cities. Toilet paper and tissue products (both victims of panic buying) from Kruger brands Cashmere, Purex,



SpongeTowels and Scotties were escorted to hospitals in Mercedes-Benz cars. And finally, Harvey's partnered with Bauer to rig payment terminals with its hockey sticks so that the QSR's drive-thru workers could practice physical distancing.

THANKING HEROES

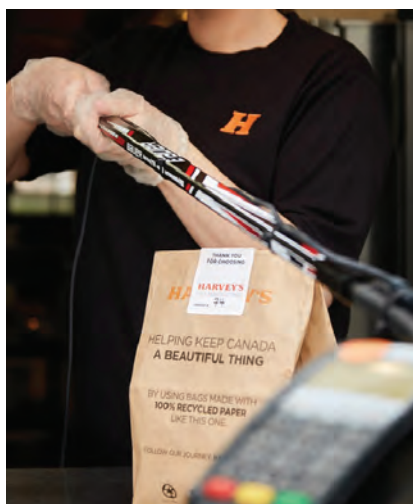
While many are fortunate to be able to hunker down in their homes all day, essential workers – a.k.a heroes – go outside and work long, difficult and dangerous hours in hospitals, stores and streets. They deserve all the donations, discounts and deliveries companies can give.

When Endy discovered that medical workers were sleeping on stretchers and in overfilled on-call rooms, the bed-in-a-box brand came to the rescue with mattresses, pillows and protectors. Endy donated its products to ICU and CCU staff so they get proper rest during breaks while dealing with an influx of cases in Vancouver. Meanwhile, Sleep Country donated \$1.5 million worth of mattresses and bedding to at-risk and vulnerable communities and shelters impacted by the pandemic.

Essential workers are on their feet all day, so, naturally, shoe brands stepped in with donations of their own. Vessi, Dr. Scholl's, Ardenne and Allbirds were among the many footwear donors. Some even donated shoes to frontline workers when shoppers purchased a pair for themselves.

Making essential workers' lives easier outside hospitals has also been a focus for several brands and retailers. Larger fast food chains like Nando's, Earls, Tim Hortons and Paramount are discounting food or handing out free coffee and meals for hospital staff. Grocery runs were also made easier for those on the frontline and for at-risk Canadians, with retailers creating dedicated shopping hours for their safety and convenience.

Essential workers on highways need help just as much as those in hospitals. Some truck drivers cook in their vehicles, but with food in shorter supply on shelves, many rely on QSRs at truck stops for sustenance. However, with physical distancing forcing restaurants to close their doors, drive-thru is the only option. Recognizing that large commercial vehicles can't fit in those narrow pick-up spots, McDonald's created a



Here for those who are there for us.

#RollingItForward



Clockwise from top left: Brands link arms in the race to flatten the curve: Bauer supplied Harvey's with hockey sticks to deliver food (at a distance) at drive-thrus, while Kruger and Mercedes drove paper products to those who need them; Endy helped medical staff get much-needed shut eye with a delivery of mattresses for break rooms; big brands, like Vans, are supporting small brands to help keep their lights on; Pizza Pizza shuttles PPE supplies from Knix to essential workers; Major League Socks created a special "healthcare worker" collection in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross.



dedicated curbside area (parking spot #99), where its crew brings food directly to drivers, so that no essential worker is left hungry.

BUYING LOCAL

The movement to support small businesses is not new. However, it's never been more crucial or evident than during the crisis.

Every big business was once a small business. Take Vans. The Van Doren brothers opened their first store over 50 years ago. Now their brand is a global skateboard shoe mecca. Having been on the other side, the Vans family decided to "Foot The Bill" for its

small business partners. It's giving back to local skate shops, restaurants, art galleries and music venues, by donating the proceeds from the sale of custom Vans to help keep them afloat during the pandemic.

Other big brands like Stella Artois, London Drugs and Greenhouse are also pitching in. The Labatt-owned beer brand joined a growing movement where people are asked to exchange cash now for goods later. Its "Rally for Restaurants" platform asks Canadians to buy a \$25 or \$50 gift card to local restaurants or bars, which they can redeem when doors open once again.

London Drugs is transforming centre store aisles into "Local Central" spaces dedicated to small businesses that apply. Similarly, juice company Greenhouse is partnering with food brands for its "Plant Pantry," a shoppable collection of locally sourced goods from companies that previously also supplied to now-closed restaurants, like Fresh City Farms, Mabel Bakeries, Pluck and Terroni. The items are delivered to homes the next day, bringing cash flow to businesses and food to pantries that may be a little bare thanks to panic buying. 🍷



Shepherding through the mayhem

In early March, marketers and media agency execs came together for a roundtable dinner. A week later, COVID-19 triggered nationwide lockdowns. Brands were already challenged with navigating disrupted categories and shifting consumer behaviour, with the pandemic upending plans and leaving many without a solid footing.

Media in Canada's news editor Bree Rody Mantha moderated the discussion on planning in a world of uncertainty with Brock Leeson, VP, digital at Jungle Media; Devon MacDonald, CEO at Mindshare; Alex Panousis, CEO at Carat; Lynne Piette, director of marketing at Volkswagen; and Richard Trevisan, brand director at Genesis Motors.

How are you looking at changing consumer behaviour from a planning perspective?

Carat's Alex Panousis: If you look at brands like Purell and Clorox, they're all sold out because of panic buying. There's a behaviour that has now been created. You have to wonder,

how will that impact the way that products are bought and sold when people are nervous? Do you talk to everyone and get a pulse on what they're thinking and feeling? Well, we've learned from election polling that you can't do that, because they're not going to tell you the truth. So what's real and what's true? They've just told

us that they do this or that, but is it really true based on their behaviour? We're now looking at the totality of communication with consumers versus a narrow questionnaire they're asked to fill out.

Jungle Media's Brock Leeson: I think there's a bubbling up of the mindfulness and wellness trend. There are ways brands can curb consumer anxiety from societal and media pressures. Knowing about all of the deaths that have happened globally; that causes a lot of anxiety. So I do think a major trend, and it comes back to value and connection with customers, is around bringing peace and harmony.

Volkswagen's Lynne Piette: With everything that's going on in the world, the customer is overwhelmed. And so we launched a brand platform that's for the new Volkswagen and which is in line with our transformation of "Be The Change" and it's this call-to-action for everybody, including ourselves, to do something. We've been building a Canadian infrastructure

From Top Left:

DEVON MACDONALD, Mindshare

LYNNE PIETTE, Volkswagen

BROCK LEESON, Jungle Media

Bottom Right:

RICHARD TREVISAN, Genesis

ALEX PANOUSIS, Carat

for charging stations across Canada for all EVs, not just Volkswagens.

Everyone has been stopped, they've been paralyzed, and they don't know what to do. We're saying "Be The Change" and do something. The platform is anchored in the paralysis of the world we live in.

Leeson: I think some of the best campaigns help to solve the paralysis of choice. There is simplicity: this is what we stand for, this is our offering, everything is just really clear. The media plan needs to be very clear, so that we can ease the anxiety of having 20 different options.

When it comes to the purchase journey, how are you rethinking the consideration stage?

Mindshare's Devon MacDonald: Consumers have real power now. They can activate and force the hands of brands to respond, whether it's in the laying down of dollars or what they're going to optimize against.

It's a real investment to understand those triggers and signals from the consumer. I think the days of "This is our brand, we are just going to be that, and thou shalt purchase us" are long gone. An empowered consumer wants a brand to relate to them. So the messaging and media has to do that. The best brands are the ones that have figured that out.

Panousis: When I think about the mattress category, 10 years ago it was Sleep Country, Sealy and whatever other option. And then someone came up with this idea of a bed-in-a-box, and not any bed, but one that's really good. It's interesting in terms of how they created this new marketplace. I don't know if it was the fear of missing out or if it was just the new proposition, but all of a sudden you saw everybody buying it.

If you look at how they drove consideration, a part of it was the classic, 'Who's interested in buying a mattress?' and looking for the intent signals. But part of it was also just creating a white space that didn't exist before.

Genesis' Richard Trevisan: I don't think many companies spend enough time looking at how to retain customers. You try to get more acquisition and you make retention a second priority. But you have to do more, you have to create services and make purchase reassurance important. In my case, I have lots of information because Genesis is an online buying experience. So I'm using that to understand ownership.

Piette: It's also the customer experience that wins in the end, because customers' expectations are completely different now than they've ever been. Volkswagen has done so much customer research in the past four years. We're trying to map out that ideal customer journey and learning from others.

Panousis: I think it's ironic that it took disruption for everyone to go, 'Actually, we need to focus on our customers and learn about them, instead of thinking about things like brand features.'

"I THINK IT'S IRONIC THAT IT TOOK DISRUPTION FOR EVERYONE TO GO, 'ACTUALLY, WE NEED TO FOCUS ON OUR CUSTOMERS AND LEARN ABOUT THEM.'"

Alex Panousis

As you go beyond features and more into brand building, is that taking you into different channels?

Leeson: I think a lot of late-state start-ups cross bows in terms of performance and they're very focused on acquisition, but then they realize they need a brand. Performance has plateaued a bit, it's kind of flatlined, and companies are realizing they need that brand love.





Just a few days before the pandemic prompted a lockdown in Toronto, execs broke bread and discussed planning in an age of disruption.

are also looking at end-to-end offerings.

When an ad gets a person to a brand's site but they don't convert, whose fault is that? At the end of the day, it's all of our faults. We all sit at the table. And that's where things get really interesting, that evolution of both agencies and clients. There's an inflection point where we just have to learn, because it's not good enough to talk about performance and awareness as two separate things. It's all connected.

Piette: Our agencies are working together on briefs and they're creating consolidated recommendations. If you're mandating it and you want integrated briefs, then you have to give integrated briefs, and you can't have the

media agency present something and then the creative. It's work on our end, but the outcome is so much better.

What does value mean from a media buyer's perspective in 2020?

Panousis: Media agencies really need to understand the role of the brand and the measure of success.

I say to a lot of clients, 'Maybe we're better off jumping on whatever bonus structure you have. How do you measure sales and bonus? OK. Let's align on that and figure out a way to measure the way media works against that.' Because the 'soft things' aren't working for any of us. We have to start to think of new ways to evaluate value.

Leeson: It's mayhem out there, consumers and channels are changing drastically. But that's the value a media agency can bring in 2020. We need to help organize that as best we can. We need to think about the consumer and all the disruption that's happening, and show value in the plans and in marketing. I don't think there is a more important time to shepherd through the mayhem.

“

“IT'S MAYHEM OUT THERE. BUT THAT'S THE VALUE A MEDIA AGENCY CAN BRING IN 2020. WE NEED TO HELP ORGANIZE THAT AS BEST WE CAN” **Brock Leeson**

”

Piette: A lot of people know Volkswagen, but they don't put us on their consideration list because of some barriers. And so we need to change people's perceptions so that, when they're in the process of buying a car, they think of Volkswagen. You can't just have performance to do that. I'd say that we're guilty of being too heavy on performance over the last two years. The old funnel still exists; you have to get the awareness and consideration high enough to eventually not have to work so hard on performance marketing.

Panousis: If you think about brands like Endy or Casper, or any tech company, they use social or digital in all stages of the funnel, as opposed to the “big wok” of TV for one thing and then digital for something else. So, for example,

Mejuri is an amazing jewellery company, a Canadian brand that really exploded in the luxury-esque market. They have a fundamentally deeper understanding of who is buying, why they're buying it, and they've stacked their communication on social and with influencers. It's interesting to see how an influencer can be a top-of-funnel tactic, but it can also be a bottom-of-funnel tactic depending on the story.

How has the relationship between agencies and brands changed?

Leeson: Every year it feels like our clients step back in terms of looking at the bigger picture. We're getting into owned media and we're considering the client's website as much as we are influencers or TV. As media agencies, we're the holders of consumer analysis and data, so we try to consider everything and see the full picture.

Panousis: It used to be the creative agencies that owned the brand and media agencies were on the consumer journey. Now there's definitely a blend. The greatest capability that creative agencies are jumping into is experience planning. And then media agencies

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CANADA MATTERS.**

**A STRONG
ADVERTISING
BUSINESS IN
CANADA MATTERS.**

**A HEALTHY
MEDIA INDUSTRY
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**AGENCIES IN
CANADA MATTER.**

For marketing to
work in Canada
we need marketing
done in Canada
for Canadians.



“

“With the amount of change we’ve experienced in our industry, discussions like these help identify emerging marketing trends, discover new tech advancements, like artificial intelligence, as well as establishing best practices.

That’s why The Globe supports this roundtable series. It is a deep dive into how we can all work together to build a sustainable Canadian media industry for the future.”

– Andrew Saunders
CRO, The Globe and Mail

To keep investment and to create effective
advertising in Canada we **NEED** a strong ecosystem.

strategy



**Media
Group**

IF NOT NOW, WHEN? IF NOT US, WHO?

There is an old saying in advertising:
Our assets go down the elevator every night.

Today, most of our assets are sitting at home.

And while endless Zoom meetings are no doubt trying our patience, that's not nearly as bad as being stuck at home and out of work.

There are folks out there who would give anything to be in a meeting right now.

That's why nabs is so very important. nabs was created to support the health and well-being of all individuals in the media, marketing, and communications industry in Canada.

There are many agencies that are big nabs supporters.

But as an industry, we have to do more for nabs.

I'm talking about every agency, media and marketing company supporting nabs through payroll deduction.

Want to work in this industry? *Great.*

Then you need to support it. *Period.*

I know that we are living in uncertain and difficult times. But as leaders in the communications industry, we need to help those who need help the most.

And they need that help today.

So, I'm asking you: please clear your calendar for 5 minutes and donate at www.nabs.org

Our industry – our assets – will be stronger for it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank', with a stylized, cursive script.

FRANK PALMER

T H E



L I S T

How Canada's top agency partners approach new brand challenges

Getting a berth on the A-List is not a walk in the park. To qualify, this year's agencies have already proven their chops by taking top honours in the world's most prestigious awards shows.

Many of the firms on this year's list have nimbly responded to all the change afoot in the industry by crossing traditional silos and skillsets, redefining and expanding internal roles, focusing on business outcomes as well as communications outcomes and applying as much creativity to their culture as they do to their client work.

Whether independent or part of a larger network, they are lean, adaptive, hungry and entrepreneurial.

They have relied on those qualities to grow their businesses, to innovate, and to win clients and in doing so, also achieved recognition for work that raised the industry bar. They will need those same traits to guide them as they steer into the winds of uncertainty generated by COVID-19.

It will be a year like no other.



It's like ballet.
But all the dancers
are covered in
barnacles.

Target

Outsider takes road less travelled, and wins agency of the year

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ONE OF CANADA'S most innovative and celebrated agencies, head east. Stop when you run out of Canada.

"Any further east, and you'd be getting wet," says Catherine Kelly, director of account management at Target. "We're outsiders. We're closer to Dublin than Detroit. This place gives us a very unique perspective on how to size-up a problem, and how to create an unexpected solution for our clients."

Located in a waterfront heritage building, on the oldest street in the oldest city in North America, Target is a full-service boutique made up of 40 ad pros from around the world. The agency constantly punches above its weight when it comes to winning awards for creativity and advertising effectiveness.

For example, Target won *strategy's* Small Agency of the Year 2019. It's a top 16 creative shop on *strategy's* Creative Report Card again this year. It's one of only 20 Canadian agencies to ever win a Gold Lion at Cannes. It's won multiple Gold CASSIES for advertising effectiveness, including the Grand Prix. And, if there's an award for natural born storytellers, they'd probably win that, too.

What's more, they'd be happy about it. This band of rebels and "Outsiders" celebrates the fact that they are located far from the bellybutton of adland. "We're outside the box. We're surrounded and influenced by a very different people and culture, architecture, creativity, and sense of humour," says Noel O'Dea, president and founder. "We can't help but see things differently, or take a different perspective. And that leads to surprising ideas, 180° different from the usual."

No cookie-cutter solutions from Target. "We avoid the ubiquitous 'Best Practices' like the plague," says O'Dea. "Because Best Practices are all about uniformity and predictability. That's the antithesis

Targeting highly literate and sophisticated travellers, Target's 'Find Yourself' campaign for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism is the most successful destination marketing and tourism campaign in North America, delivering year-over-year increases in visitors and winning more than 350 awards since 2005.

of surprise and differentiation. If a brand is undifferentiated, it is nothing but a commodity, lacking a competitive advantage, and the love and loyalty of customers."

Target is best known for the hugely successful Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism campaigns. That one-two punch of innovation and efficacy also shows in its work over the years for Maple Leaf Foods and Unilever, PureGold and Aurora, Rogers and Bell, Labatt and Molson, and Air Canada brands Tango, Zip and Jazz.

"We see creativity as a powerful business tool," says Jef Combden, director of communications

planning. "Newfoundland is bursting at the seams with creativity, storytellers, and artists. That immersive cultural influence inspires and shapes everything we do, from our strategic planning approach to our creative and branding work."

Creative storytelling does seem to be at the heart of Target's DNA. "We love creating advertising that doesn't look or feel like advertising," says O'Dea. "We dig deep to discover a brand's true personality. Then we create stories that people want to hear and see, that can sweep people off their feet in a memorable way. It's never about the latest bling; it's about baking in respect and humanity."

"We get hundreds of love letters," says Kelly. "The latest arrived in an envelope addressed to 'The ad agency that makes the Tourism ads, Newfoundland.' We are committed to doing emotional work that makes people 'feel' something, that moves them, that evokes laughter or love. That people remember."

These days, in an overcommunicated world, where people don't know who to trust or what to believe, Target's philosophy and approach seems on the mark.

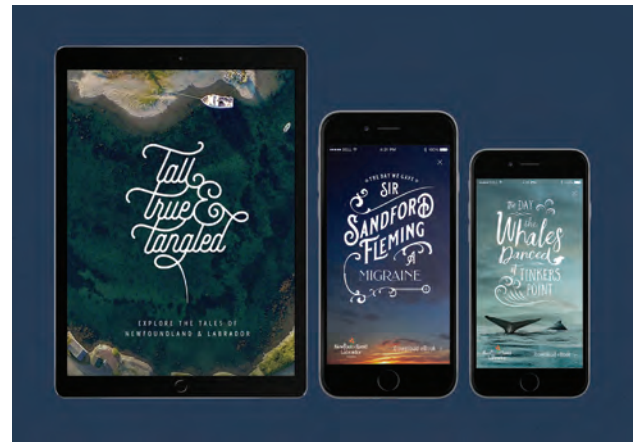
As it celebrates its 40th anniversary, Target is still "working our buns off to stay small," says O'Dea. "We're not doing this to scale up and sell out. We love what we do. Our sweet spot is 40 people because there's no bureaucracy, no red tape, and no BS. Our senior people love to be hands-on, working with clients. This is not complicated. This is fun."

On results, Kelly says "We make the cash register ring for our clients. We dig deep. We choose the road less travelled. In many ways, our Newfoundland location is our secret ingredient. (You're not going to print that, are you?)"

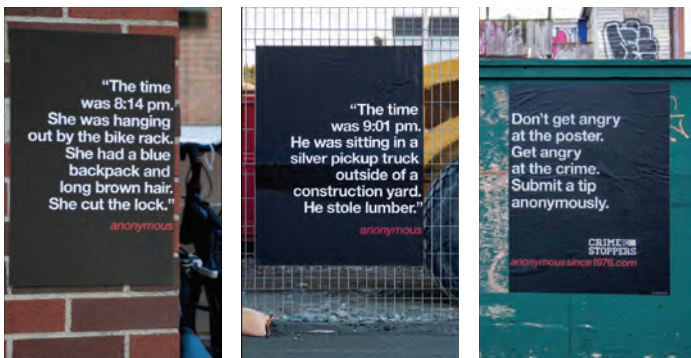
"We don't report to New York or Paris, we report to no one but ourselves, and our clients," concludes O'Dea. "And our Moms."



To demonstrate 'The Power of Words', Target cast a critical eye on the building blocks of language. In a campaign of 26 radio spots and posters, each letter was playfully ridiculed for its shape, size, even what it'd look like in an elevator. Targeting theatre aficionados, Perchance's ticket sales doubled since Target took the stage.



Created for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism, Target developed this stunning digital storytelling hub and immersive website, wrote over 60 original stories in video, long-form narrative and audio, and published a collection of 'Tangled Tales' eBooks. The result? Over 300,000 online reading sessions, and over 27,000 eBook downloads.



To overcome people's fear of being 'outed', Target made Crime Stoppers synonymous with anonymous. No brand name. No logo. No URL. The result? A tsunami of social and news coverage. Unique visits jumped +49%. Crime tips increased +21%. Book 'em, Danno.



Target's 'Find Yourself' campaign positions Newfoundland and Labrador as a creative and exotic destination for experienced and sophisticated travellers looking for authentic experiences. The hugely-successful integrated campaign runs across TV, print, in-flight, digital, and social media platforms.



The 'Anthem', an unignorable three-minute rap video, successfully put Newfoundland's smallest city on the map. Taking a sharp 90° turn from industry 'Best Practices', Target's self-deprecating rap went viral, reaching 97 million and generating over 100,000 quality views in 10 days. Famous, without spending a cent on media.



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AOY: The (streamlined) 2020 edition

Scaled back, but continuing to recognize the skills and abilities behind the best body of work in Canada – just without bells and whistles.

NEW intent to enter deadline: June 26

Contact Justin Dallaire at jdallaire@brunico.com for more information



Craft brought Moosehead into the moose wars news cycle, helping to win one for the home team; Moose Jaw mayor Fraser Tolmie cheers with Trevor Grant, Moosehead VP marketing and sales.

"That's a fun example of capitalizing on something people are actually talking about to deliver relevant messages on behalf of the brand," says Pasquin.

Moosehead, along with Nintendo and GE Appliances Canada, have been clients since Craft's first six months of business. Pasquin says "they realized we were offering big agency thinking with a much smaller model, cutting out a lot of the swirl that can happen with big firms."

This concept continues to work for Craft. This past year saw a number of noteworthy wins, including The Bentway, Toronto's not-for-profit park under the Gardiner Expressway, which has become the site of all manner of novel activations from art installations to a Halloween costume competition for dogs.

New business wins also include Yves Veggie Cuisine, a brand that has been a provider of plant-based foods for 30 years – long before plant-based became a thing. Their pitch, aimed at the flexitarian consumer, is built around an endorsement deal with Olympic figure skater Tessa Virtue.

Earth's Own, another plant-based brand, and Flexday, a Toronto start-up that connects people with underused spaces that can serve as workspaces during the day also signed on to work with Craft. And to round-off the 2019 win column, Craft added The Royal Agricultural Winter Fair and shopping mall Vaughan Mills to their roster.

Aside from her crew of seasoned senior practitioners, Pasquin attributes the firm's successes to the good old-fashioned skill of storytelling, and knowing not just how to tell a compelling story, but where and who to tell it to. With that approach in mind, her ambition is simple: to be "one of the biggest small agencies in Canada."



For the re-launch of GE Appliances' style-centric Café line, Craft tapped Canada's most stylish food expert – Queer Eye's Antoni Porowski – for social content integration, and kicked the program off with a VIP dinner at the AGO.

Craft Public Relations

Storycraft and senior smarts

LISA PASQUIN, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT of Toronto-based Craft Public Relations, has seen her five-year-old firm grow from one person, a laptop and a mobile phone to 14 practitioners united on a mission to, in her own words, "tell stories so compelling others want to share them".

In the pre-digital world, 'others' were usually journalists at major media outlets. They were the ultimate judge of whether the story you were pitching made it to print or air.

Now, when 'on air' encompasses a growing array of digital platforms with highly fragmented audiences, 'others' can include a diverse group of online content creators or even consumers themselves.

But the approach, Pasquin explains, remains the same: finding stories that fall at the intersection of 'brand truth' and 'human truth'. One hurdle to navigate is when the stories a brand wants to tell won't naturally "generate water cooler conversation". So vetting for topics that work on both fronts is required, always mindful of not losing the brand in the equation.

She cites a recent activation for long-time client, Moosehead Breweries. Back in January 2019, there was extensive media chatter about Mac the Moose, a giant statue in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan whose title of world's tallest moose was challenged by a new statue in Norway. Stephen Colbert dubbed it a 'moose war'.

"That's a human truth that was capturing the world's attention, in which we saw the opportunity to communicate a brand truth: Moosehead's connection to Canadian values," says Pasquin. Craft worked with Moosehead to donate \$25K to fund an 'antlerectomy' for Mac, helping him reclaim his title – and maintain Canadian pride.



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Paradigm

Measuring what matters: it's all about the impact

SOMETIMES YOU GET THOSE stop-and-think moments – those deep insights that change the way you think. For Paradigm, it was work with two clients early on that resonated: PokerStars.net and Energizer Personal Care (now Edgewell Personal Care). Both arrived soon after the Toronto-based company's 2007 launch, and both drove home the same learnings.

"What became apparent early on," recalls Partner Tracey Bochner, "is what they seemed to value most from us was our strategic insight, our creativity and our marketing strategy."

Bochner explains they were being brought in on work that was well beyond the scope of traditional PR. "We were being tasked with programs that delivered against business objectives, not just communications objectives. We were doing promotions, events, sponsorships, sampling and digital. The outcome was that our business ended up evolving to meet that demand."

When it comes to Edgewell, for example, Paradigm started by working on PR for one brand, but it grew to PR, digital and XM across all the company's brands – all because the client challenged them and Paradigm stepped up and delivered.

Those early lessons refined how Paradigm viewed success, turning it strongly towards what marketers care about most. "If the solution is focused on the business impact, it's no longer vanity metrics of: 'Well, we got you this much exposure,'" observes Partner at Paradigm, Mike Abbass. "You have to back it up with meaningful KPIs. We measure our work against what matters to our clients."

Clear evidence of the company's results-oriented thinking shows in recent work for the Insurance Bureau of Canada in Alberta. When you think 'modern and responsive,' odds are insurance is not something that immediately springs to mind. This is an industry, after all, that still

For Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC), the first step in motivating politicians to reform outdated auto insurance reg was getting the government to move from antiquated "pink slips" to digital solutions. Paradigm developed a creative digital and XM solution – the Museum of Outdated Technology – which opened the door for change, resulting in the Alberta government announcing a move to digital pink slips.

requires you to drive around with little pink slips of paper in your glove box to prove you're covered.

So, how do you start a conversation about modernization?

Well, you create the Museum of Outdated Technology (MOOT), a dusty old destination filled with all the best tech of the '80s – giant cell phones, fax machines, Sony Walkmen and... an insurance display that hasn't changed at all since then.

"They came to us and said: 'We need to get people to pay attention,'" recalls Bochner of their sit-down with IBC. "Some way that's funny... which is not usually how people talk about insurance.

Insurance is boring and everyone knows that. So we needed something that was super attention-grabbing."

A combination of social and a live event for MOOT timed to the recent provincial election in Alberta opened the door for conversations between the government and IBC, and a move to electronic pink slips was soon announced. Job done. Paradigm is now hard at work creating the next big change.

And how hard was it to sell a self-deprecating campaign to an industry leader? Not hard at all, it turns out.

"These are, without question, some of the smartest people we've ever worked with," says Bochner of her insurance client. "They are a perfect example of a really great partner who is always open to listening to a new creative approach."

Abbas concurs: success comes down to a client that's ready to unleash the team's potential. "We love working with partners who allow us to help solve their business and communication problems, versus being an afterthought."

And that's why it comes back to being able to offer end-to-end PR, digital and experiential service. "For us, [growing out] XM was probably the smartest business decision we made," notes Abbas. "PR people have always done events and solved problems but XM people are great at creating experiences."

Beyond the award-winning IBC work, you can see Paradigm's deft hand on campaigns like Schick Hydro's "The Man I Am," Under Armour, recent work for the NFL, and more.

And as brands need to change gears quickly, the fact that this 22 person shop is accustomed to being flexible and lean comes in handy. "We're built for speed," sums up Bochner. "We can deliver the programs, the big ideas, the executions – quickly."



To tell the brand story of Bulldog Skincare, Paradigm focuses on special events, media relations, influencers and social media to showcase product attributes and highlight the brand's authentic voice. That's helped Bulldog become the fastest growing men's skincare brand in Canada.



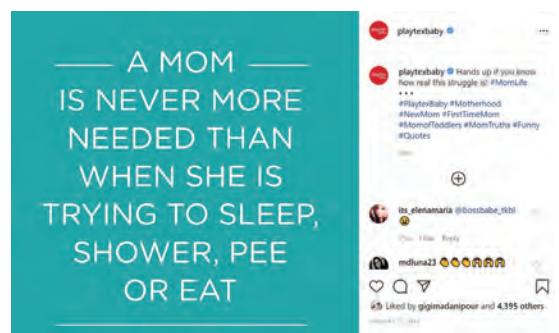
Paradigm has worked with Hawaiian Tropic for more than 12 years, helping transition the brand from beauty pageant sponsor to must-have beauty mainstay. Paradigm helped communicate the brand benefits to a new audience by launching HT's social channels (including the first Hawaiian Tropic Twitter page), Canadian Instagram page, as well as creating influencer events and programs.



Timex continues to introduce new collections, sponsorships and partnerships with brands such as Peanuts and Todd Snyder. Over the 10 years that Paradigm has been working with Timex Canada, the agency's activities have evolved from focusing primarily on media relations to span social media, event support and influencer marketing, working with names like Adam Joseph Chase and Matty Conrad (above).



As the PR AOR, Paradigm works with Under Armour on its influencer marketing to showcase the brand as a leader and innovator in the performance apparel and footwear industry. Montreal-based brand ambassador Jennifer Rochon (above, @jenniferrochon_jro) was featured in a global campaign to launch the new Infinity sports bra and Meridian leggings.



As the North American digital, PR and XM AOR for Playtex Baby, Paradigm connects the brand with its core consumers, pre-natal and new moms, focusing on the use of digital media, influencer marketing, media relations and sampling to impact Diaper Genie and bottle sales.



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The C&B Advertising team celebrates at the 2019 Anvil Awards.

C&B Advertising

The brand behind a brand



ALGARY'S C&B ADVERTISING is creating award-winning work that's helping local brands navigate uncertain times.

"We're focusing on our existing clients and working to help them grow their businesses and manage their brands during a really challenging time," says C&B managing partner Leigh Blakely. "The Alberta economy has been in a difficult place even prior to COVID-19."

Blakely believes the eight-year-old shop is at its optimal size with its staff of 25. "We've grown based on client needs and invested in employees based on future areas of importance, whether that's creative, digital or media," she says. Recent hires include execution director John Boyd, who brings media expertise to the table from his prior remit as media director at Venture Communications, and creative developer Andrew Anderson, who enhances the shop's digital capabilities.

The agency takes pride not only in its creative output but also in its diverse client list. C&B recently embarked on new work for Travel Alberta, ATCO and Bromwich & Smith, and won an RFP for the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association.

And then there's Calgary Co-op, which C&B helped to position as an integral part of family gatherings using Christmas as a way to reinforce the grocer's role in festive traditions.

The agency devised "Together for the Holidays," in line with the retailer's larger brand positioning of "Together for Good," which has since taken on a deeper meaning during the coronavirus crisis. Built on the insight that our most memorable holiday moments often take place around the table – and not in front of a Christmas tree – drove

creative, reminding consumers that Calgary Co-op has all their hosting needs covered. The campaign included TV, radio, OOH, print, display, social and in-store POS.

For the Calgary Stampede, C&B pushed deeper into experiential channels for last year's "Get Your Yahoos Out" campaign, developed to leverage Calgarians' pride and emotion toward the iconic event and generate some much-needed community joy.

The agency worked with the Stampede to create numerous unique art installations spelling "Yahoo!" throughout the community, even incorporating hay bales into the signage along major highway entries to Calgary. These were captured in online video and spurred thousands of user-generated social moments. The campaign also comprised of billboards and activations, such as a branded ice-cream truck, which helped fuel the Stampede movement and delivered its second-highest attendance with 1.27 million visitors.

C&B's work continues to get noticed, earning a dominant 13 trophies at the Ad Rodeo Association's last Anvil Awards, including Best of Show for "Calgary's Rowdiest Office." In addition to this Stampede campaign success, the agency picked up Anvils for its work with Calgary Co-op, Big Rock Brewery, City & Country Urban Winery & Tasting Bar and Peters' Drive-In.

Last November C&B scored eight wins at the Best of CAMA (Canadian Agri-Marketing Association) Awards for its campaign for the United Farmers of Alberta (UFA). The agency was brought in to develop a new brand positioning that would forge a much deeper emotional connection with the supplier's customers and members, unite the organization's lines of business, and increase sales across their retail, industrial and B2B businesses.

Immersive research included interviews with stakeholders throughout the business and ride-alongs with customers engaged in trucking, ranching and farming. The resulting insights were that work never really stops for the people UFA serves, and what they prize is the ability to finish their current task and move on to the next one. The creative expression of these insights was "Get it. Done."

The new brand premiered at UFA's Spring Launch and AGM, followed by the release of video "The Never-Ending Day" – on YouTube, social platforms and agriculture-related media – depicting a farmer's non-stop life. Year-over-year sales increased 77% while the campaign was in-market and UFA website visits were up 28%.

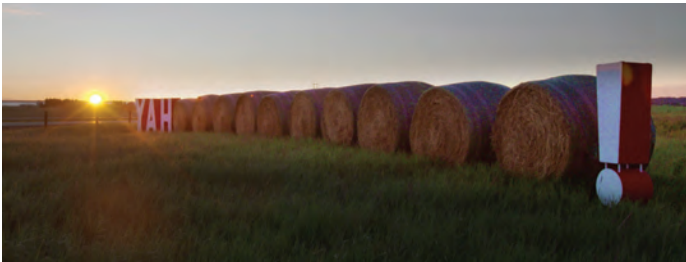
The campaign is a case study in why C&B positions itself as "the brand behind a brand" – an extension of its clients' marketing departments. Blakely elaborates, "As consumer trends change at a moment's notice, many clients have added creative resources in-house, so it's important that we are set up to work collaboratively with them, and build strong brand foundations that can be used to drive their businesses. That flexible approach is an important factor as brands face new challenges and need a partner who has their back and can 'Get it. Done.'"



"Together for the Holidays" for Calgary Co-op elevated dining-room tables to their rightful place as the most important family gathering element for the festive season.



"Get it. Done." for United Farmers of Alberta (UFA) celebrates the organization's hard-working customers – farmers, truckers, and construction and industrial workers – whose jobs don't follow regular office hours and whose work never truly ends.



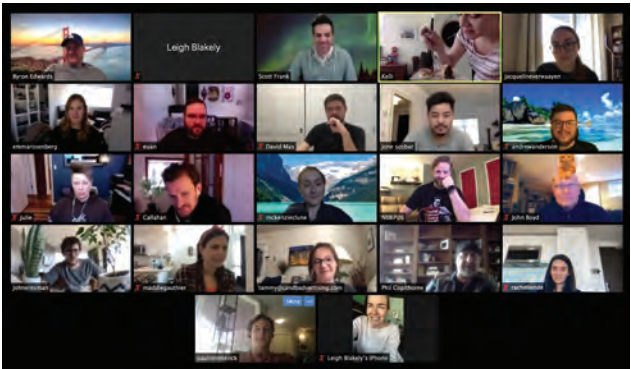
The Calgary Stampede's 2019 "Get Your Yahoos Out" campaign featured unique art installations and unexpected joyful pop-ups throughout the community, reigniting the passion the city has for its iconic event.



Tourism Richmond's destination branding campaign "Pacific. Authentic." brings the coastal city's Pacific setting and multicultural influences to life in a vibrant, energetic style.

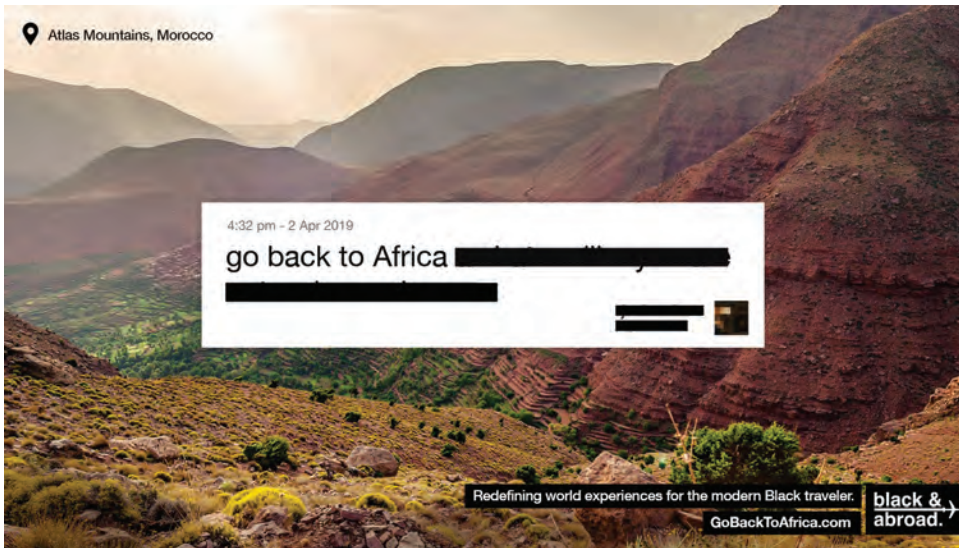


C&B helped Big Rock Brewery, known as the 'grandfather of craft beer in Canada,' find its true voice by channeling the plainspoken tone of founder Ed McNally. The campaign yielded three Anvil Awards and four Merits for the agency.



Staff sharing home-office setups and staying connected during COVID-19.

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This Cannes Grand Prix-winning campaign, done in partnership with FCB/six, turned a racial slur into a call to action for Black & Abroad, which is focused on curating travel experiences for Black tourists.

Initiative

When media is the message



YOU HAVE TO LOVE A COMPANY that lives up to its own hype. This is Initiative's second year on the A List, when president Helen Galanis promised 2019 would be 'a trailblazing year'.

The team delivered. In terms of recognition, Initiative won Cannes Lions for the Go Back to Africa campaign done in partnership with FCB/six. Galanis says that set off a series of wins from Media Agency of the Year and Media Leader of the Year to Best in Show at the MIAs, "we definitely exceeded our own expectations for recognition and impact."

Initiative, which has over 200 staffers at offices in Toronto and Montreal, handles media on major brands including RBC, Amazon, CBC, Destination Canada, LEGO, Travel Alberta and Wendy's. One of the things Galanis sees as key to their success, is leveraging an understanding of culture to build relevance for these brands. As an example she cites work they've done for Baskin Robbins.

The brand had a partnership with Netflix's Season 3 of *Stranger Things*. To amplify that, Nish Shah, head of strategy at Initiative, says they looked to amplify the Baskin Robbins store at Toronto's Woodbine Mall that was turned into a replica of the Scoops Ahoy store in *Stranger Things*.

As it was only one location, Shah says they relied on influencers to scale it. Building on cultural cues, Shah describes a challenge on TikTok where customers would order an ice cream cone and try to eat it upside down. "It sounds ridiculous but it was a behaviour we had seen on TikTok." Last but not least, a Snapchat AR lens allowed customers to interact with the *Stranger Things* theme and characters.

The TikTok tactic worked like a charm, generating over 13,000 video postings, and Galanis says the agency's focus on partnering with media companies played a role in the success. "This challenge

predated TikTok having any footprint in Canada so we engaged the US team to get a jump on the market. It was proof of our belief in moving ideas on the basis of cultural relevance and not being limited by opportunities normally available."

One of the other promises Galanis made last year was to focus on ad avoidance. An example of that paying off is *Vacations of the Brave*, a video series for Destination Canada done in partnership with Ogilvy. The brand content program was the first of its kind to be available on Prime Video globally.

The eight-episode series targets US audiences unfamiliar with Canada, and focuses on interesting American travellers in an engaging reality TV storytelling style that deviates from the tourism norm.

Galanis says the Prime calibre content allowed them to reach consumers in ways no other media agency has yet unlocked.

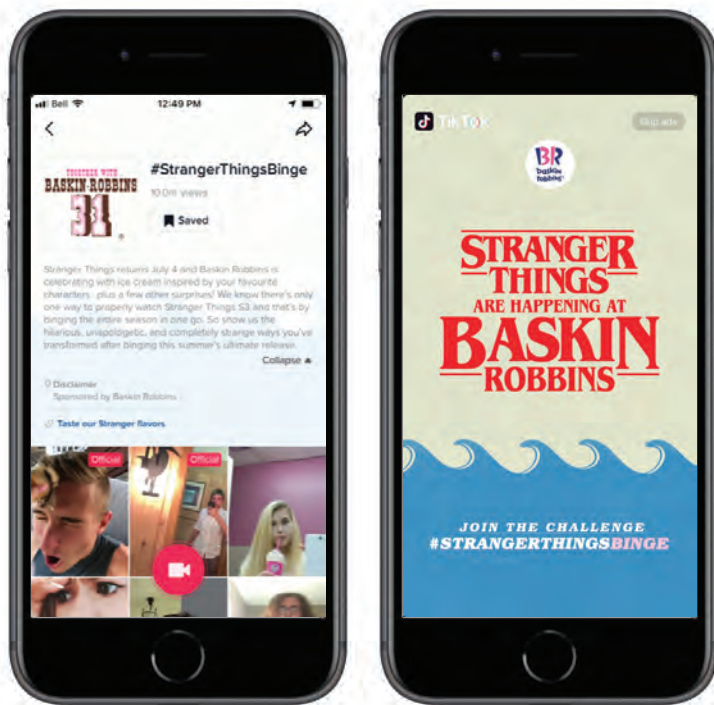
Shah adds that the view-through rates were great, "but what's interesting is watching how it travels across different platforms." By extending it across YouTube and other places in the Amazon ecosystem it had life beyond a mini-series on Prime.

Galanis explains that this was not advertising at all in the traditional sense. "It competes with content that consumers are choosing to watch. It's not just an interruption. Ad avoidance is a real consumer behaviour and we can't change that, so we look for ways to get around it."

So does that make Initiative a media agency or a content agency? Or both? Shah believes it's more a case of "pushing the work to find interesting stories to tell, and client partners who are open to doing things because of trust we've built."

He also ascribes the evolution to great partnerships with creative agencies. "We want to be the media agency that creatives want to work with, because we are going to push the work."

Up until now Initiative has been focused on making the work best in class. Now Galanis says it's about attracting and keeping the best talent. "If we can continue to nurture this talent base and make it the happiest, best trained team in the industry, that will result in the happiest clients and the best work."



Initiative used TikTok and Snap to help extend Baskin Robbins' "Scoops Ahoy Ice Cream Parlor" activation. Over 13,000 user generated TikTok videos were created involving the brand.



Instead of traditional TV spots, *Vacations of the Brave* aired as an eight-episode realityTV miniseries on Amazon Prime targeting US audiences unfamiliar with Canada. Its storytelling power was amplified by using the content from the series across different platforms within and outside of the Amazon ecosystem.

Stop Putting Ice Cubes In Your Cocktails When You Can be Using Ice Cream Instead

Make this boozy take on an affogato in your next coffee, dessert, or both.

Presented by **Milk.**
It's in the stuff you love.



Initiative developed the "Dairy Bar", a content series featuring different dairy based cocktails to show the many delicious ways to use milk.



To build deeper relationships with the media industry, Initiative held their first "Reverse Upfront" event by hosting over 140 sales side partners to share insights, trends and strategic challenges. The key takeaways from the event were provided to each attendee in the format of a record.

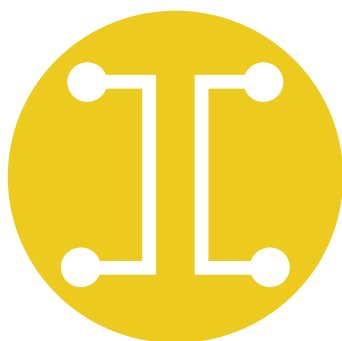


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Pomp & Circumstance

Forget status quo; this PR shop's specialty is pushing the limits of imagination

GLANCE AT THE POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE ROSTER and you'd be forgiven for thinking they had been around forever – think clients like CIBC, eBay, Bacardi, Mercedes-Benz and many others. But Toronto-based P&C has only really been a thing since 2015, when industry vets Amanda Alvaro and CD Lindsay Mattick set up their own shingle and began advising some of the biggest clients in the country.

"The vibe you get with Pomp is that we're scrappy and hunger-driven," notes Alvaro. "Clients know we're going to the wall for them every single day. Nobody's resting on their laurels here. It's a get 'er done mentality."

You certainly see that acumen at work as you watch a cluster of Mercedes tear around a frozen lake in Gimli, Manitoba for the perfect social media moment. Or, in an über-feminine pop-up at Stackt Market in Toronto that challenges the masculine vibe of cannabis culture (and helps spin it into part of a wellness routine). Or... in any number of other executions in the last year.

It's one of the reasons this bespoke PR house has attracted even more premium clients over the last 12 months, adding Earls, Mizrahi, The Hudson Hotel, Añejo, The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery and the Stratford Festival to an already impressive roster.

So, what has them lined up for the Pomp treatment?

"Ideas close the deal," sums up Alvaro. "And, having run agencies for almost 15 years, I don't say this lightly: I think we're developing some of the best creative in the country right now."

It certainly sends a message to potential clients that this shop is not going to let a brand's vision slide. The creative is baked in from day one.

"It signals that they're going to get strategic advice, as well as ideas that are getting noticed, not just in Canada, but around the globe,"

Combining a garage constructed of 88,000 lbs of ice, a fleet of high-performance vehicles, two adrenaline-charged winter driving experiences and performances from two Juno award-winning Canadian bands, P&C and Mercedes-Benz Canada proved to Canadians that #MBOwnsTheIce.

she observes, "award-winning ideas that might make them uncomfortable. But that's what you need in this kind of environment."

And, when you consider the current climate – there's a lot of discomfort and uncertainty – Pomp's appeal is that they're willing to steer into the wind.

One area triggering change is the intersection where paid meets earned, and Alvaro says that as a smaller shop, Pomp is able to quickly adapt and bring an integrated media solution to the table and find the sweet spot for clients.

"We're talking an entirely new language. The landscape of PR has changed more in the last six to 12 months than in the decade prior. Being nimble enough to pivot – that's obviously been a huge challenge, but it's also been an exciting opportunity."

It's as much about finding opportunities in those challenges as it is finding ways to overcome them.

"It's exciting to be able to tap into new verticals and bring an entire marketing mix full circle. So, we're doing everything from digital on social, to traditional media, to integrated marketing... there's nothing that a PR shop can't do now."

As brands enter uncharted marketing territory, finding new ways to overcome challenges defines the playbook beyond the PR renaissance. "Marketing, writ large, is changing," says Alvaro, "and, knowing that, you can't be doing the status quo anymore."



To launch their new industry leading travel card benefits, P&C and CIBC Aventura created Gate A: a throwback to a time was less about the utility and more about the romance, the exploration and the discovery.



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UM Canada

Re-engineering for the Future

NOW IN ITS 10TH YEAR, IPG agency, UM Canada, has built success around the mantra of 'better science + better art = better outcomes'.

In 2020, this means pushing themselves to be better than ever.

And that's a high bar. With over 250 employees at offices in Toronto, Montreal and Calgary, UM was one of Canada's most decorated media agencies last year: *Media Innovation Awards'* most awarded media agency (2019 and 2017), *strategy's* top media campaign of the year, WARC's #1 media agency for effectiveness in Canada (and only Canadian agency in the global top 50), plus notable wins at the *Effies*, *CMAAs*, *Cannes* and *Festival of Media North America* among others.

To build on that, UM is focusing on equipping its people with the skills and tools to help accelerate clients' performance in what has become the most complex, challenging and ever-changing media landscape in history.

If you are a firm bent on innovation and impact, getting out ahead of change is a prerequisite.

President Shelley Smit agrees. "We are retooling our agency to bolster our place as an industry-leader not just for 2020, but for the next 10 years. Specifically, we are focusing on capabilities and practices that will give us more time for innovation and creative thinking. We are arming our teams to adopt a more strategic view of our clients' challenges and deepening their cross-platform expertise.

UM has also doubled down on new capabilities to strengthen agency agility and responsiveness, including investing in high-powered data analytics and modeling expertise, through an expanded Decision Sciences team and the creation of a Canadian IPG Media Lab, "A unique advantage," says Smit, "that identifies innovations and emerging trends to help brands adapt to disruptive change."

That expertise is also expanding the scope of the agency's remit. "Increasingly, we are acting as business partners and playing a more

UM believes that better science and better art drives better outcomes, but equally importantly that engaged teams outperform. To inspire teamwork and also give back, UMs take part in Impact Day, an annual global initiative where the agency closes shop for a day in July to help out in the community (team pictured at left in Toronto's Esplanade neighbourhood).

consultative role," says Richard Fofana, VP strategy. "Even before projects are briefed in, we're helping clients frame business challenges and establish meaningful KPIs. We believe media should be a topline growth driver. So our people see themselves as problem-solvers whose job it is to drive better business results, regardless of their title."

It is in this spirit that Hershey briefed UM and its partners for the award-winning 'Oh Henry! 4:25' campaign last year (ranked 'top

10' globally by both WARC and Sabre Awards). Says Smit, "Innovation isn't just in the media plan, it's also in the way we collaborate with other agencies to discover the best solution. You know the concept is great when each partner is inspired to push the idea forward and feed off of each other's capabilities."

UM's commitment to that approach saw key successes in 2019. One was the BMO L'Échange Québec campaign. As the sponsor of the Montreal Impact soccer team, BMO offered fans the chance to exchange an old jersey for a new one. BMO then turned the old jerseys into soccer nets for community use and, in partnership with TVA Sports and RDS, celebrated the effort via live TV integrations. Results were impressive: a 39% lift in favourability for BMO, a 35% increase in consideration and an 800% increase in site visits.

A testament to UM's data analytics investment, UM worked closely with new non-profit client, Movember, to deliver a comprehensive media audit and optimization model using historical performance data – improving media impact by 39%. As a result, Movember's 2019 campaign drove record levels of donations, helping Movember do more good for men's health.

To launch Reese's Pieces Peanut, UM and its partners riffed on the 'story-within-a-story' theme behind the sci-fi thriller *Inception*. It launched *Peanutception* in elevators outfitted with infinity mirrors – an industry first – followed by custom 3D superboards, supported by 'posters within posters' in transit shelters and 'ads within ads' on TV and online video. The campaign over-delivered sales targets by 282%.

"Right now, UM is going through the biggest structural shift in our history. It will help propel the agency through the next decade", says Smit. "Driving this change is our fierce commitment to the spirit of better: helping our clients achieve better business growth opportunities in the face of challenge, while inspiring our passionate people to thrive as individuals and deliver to their full potential."



To launch Reese's Pieces Peanut, UM riffed on the 'story-within-a-story, dream-within-a-dream' theme behind the sci-fi thriller *Inception*. It launched Peanutception in elevators outfitted with infinity mirrors – an industry first – followed by custom 3D OOH superboards and 'ads within ads' on TV and online video, and 'posters within posters' in transit shelters. The campaign over-delivered sales targets by 282%.



UM's Decision Sciences team helped their new, non-profit client, Movember, drive record levels of donations, registrations and web traffic through a comprehensive media audit and optimization model, improving media impact by 39% and helping Movember do more good for men's health.



Guided by their mantra of *better* (see above right), UM fielded a massive REMIX CULTURE Study to fuel decision-making and help uncover and leverage powerful cultural insights (above left). UM interviewed 6,500 Canadians to understand their beliefs, values and identities, to provide a strategic cultural compass to help brands drive growth. "We're seeing the impact of cultural change – socially, politically and commercially – more than ever," says Fofana.



Leveraging the insight that there is a 'little bit of superhero' in every fan, UM worked with Sony Pictures to successfully launch anti-hero film, *Venom*, by launching a customized, leading-edge AR activation, amplified through social. UM used the Facebook AR camera function to give fans the chance to become *Venom* themselves, helping the film achieve the biggest Canadian October weekend box office of all time.



Forging an innovative partnership with TVA Sports and RDS, UM created 12 live TV integrations to celebrate BMO's massive Jersey Swap, which turned Montreal Impact soccer fans' old jerseys into greatly needed soccer nets for the community. The BMO L'Échange Québec campaign drove an impressive 39% lift in favourability and a 35% increase in consideration for BMO.



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Media Experts

Client focused, innovative, indie spirit



MEDIA EXPERTS HAS A LONG HISTORY of being pioneers; entrepreneurship is embedded in their DNA. With media sitting at the epicentre of fast-changing industries, that appetite for innovation built around evolving client challenges has driven its evolution.

The company was the first media agency in Canada to launch a search marketing practice, the first with a programmatic trade desk and first to deploy a Data Management Platform. It was also the first global shop to be Adobe AMO certified and the first to launch a dedicated Audience & Analytics service.

Founded in 1981 by Mark Sherman, the agency has offices in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver, supported by over 200 employees.

Acquired by Interpublic Group in 2015, they still operate with a nimble structure that responds to change with the agility you'd expect from an indie player. According to President Robert Jenkyn, this allows them to offer "the best of both worlds: a scrappy, entrepreneurial spirit combined with best-in-class global resources."

Media Experts' raison d'être is growing client business in a holistic manner. "Our agency model positions us as true strategic partners. Every plan we recommend to clients must answer the question, 'will this grow their business?'" explains Kris Davis, SVP client business.

This further demonstrates that every first they've initiated was born through finding solutions to fulfill a client need. It also accounts for why their client relationships last three times longer than current industry benchmarks, reflected in decade-long partnerships with major brands like Bell Canada, WestJet, and BMW Canada.

Innovation is made possible through the agency's unique structure. "We have three offices, but one P & L, meaning we operate without barriers, as one team," explains Jenkyn. While agencies typically outsource product specialists, Media Experts builds an in-house team for each brand. This means the shop's search, social and programmatic

Media Experts has one of the highest employee tenure rates of any Canadian agency. 40% of employees have been there for five years or more, which spurred the creation of their anniversary program that commemorates each 5-year milestone with a custom-designed canoe paddle.

experts are fully integrated with planning, allowing for nimble execution and optimization. It also promotes a culture of cross-discipline ideation.

The recent award-winning MINI search campaign is a great example of how innovative ideas are made possible when product specialists possess a deep understanding of their client's business, and are encouraged to bring forward solutions. In this case, Media Experts was able to leverage the high number of searches for cheap gas with messages promoting MINI's fuel-efficiency. By bidding on 'gas price'

related search terms that showed the average local price, ads directed users to a fuel-efficient MINI webpage. This campaign generated an estimated 16X increase in revenue.

This idea of delivering effective solutions runs deep within the veins of the agency. "We're not interested in silos or hierarchy. We're interested in good ideas that achieve results for our clients," stresses Davis.

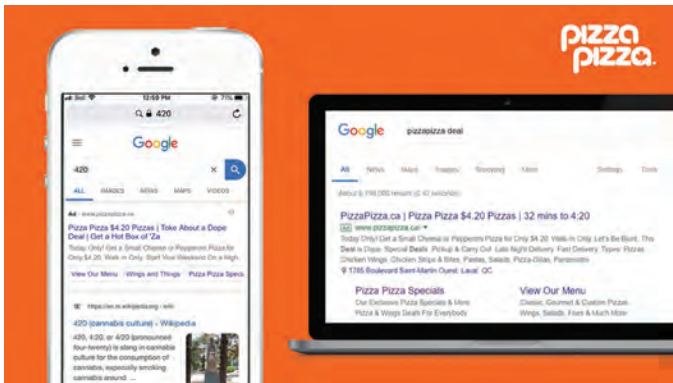
Davis believes building meaningful connections requires a deep understanding of consumers: "We see better results if we can balance hard data with human behaviour."

For example, Pizza Pizza's sales were declining due to a flat QSR market and disruption from services like Uber Eats. Using Google Trends, Media Experts learned that Canadians order pizza during two distinct timeframes: dinnertime and late night.

Pizza Pizza had never targeted its late-night business. A deeper look found strong correlating late night search patterns for something else: weed. Hence the \$4.20 pizza, available on April 20th, 2019 – the high holiday of cannabis. That insight was parlayed into a full digital program to grow late night share, which delivered a 70% sales lift YoY.

The agency's performance speaks to the impact of their unique approach. Recent new business wins include CAA, Kayak, Open Table and Earth's Own out of Vancouver. Industry recognition has come in the form of 29 awards on the international circuit in 2019 – five times the accolades won in 2018 - Microsoft's Agency Partner of the Year Canada; seven Media Innovation Awards; and eight MMA SMARTIE Awards, including Best in Show North America for Pizza Pizza's Blazing into Late-Night.

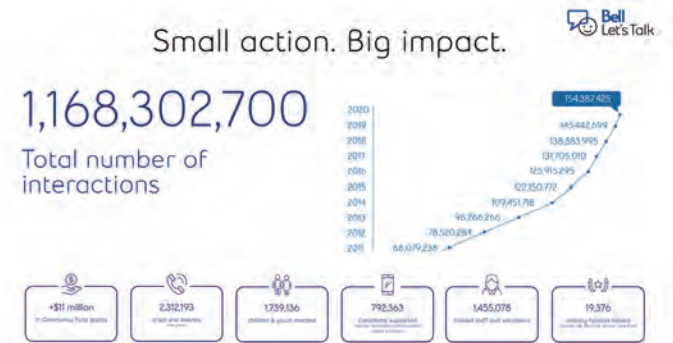
Media Experts' success has been built by delivering business outcomes that matter to clients, thus fueling continuous growth for four decades. The combination of a nimble, entrepreneurial team, guided by strategic insights, allows Media Experts to help brands succeed in a rapidly changing media environment.



By unlocking a data-driven insight, Media Experts helped Pizza Pizza uncover a new late-night audience. This charted the path to pot smokers with a “dope 4/20” search marketing strategy, driving 30% more store visits, a 70% sales lift, and seven industry accolades including Best in Show at the MMA Smartie North America Awards.



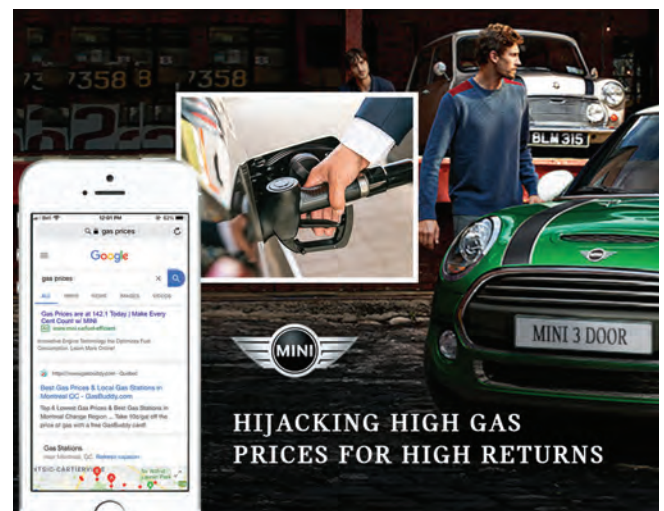
To raise awareness of all the benefits a CAA Membership offers to consumers outside of roadside assistance, Media Experts launched a multi-media campaign that resulted in a lift of 48% in ad recall.



This year marked the 10th anniversary of Bell Let's Talk. Media Experts has been the brand's media partner since Day One, using strategic media tactics to grow the movement, drive impactful change, and raise essential funds for our communities.



WestJet has been performing Christmas Miracle stunts for seven years now, setting huge expectations as the brand who does Christmas advertising best. One of their most intricate campaign of the year, Media Experts spearheaded a robust social media voting outreach to reach the right audience and result in 5.4x higher engagement than typical WestJet campaign.



Gas was on the rise, and so were the number of online searches for up-to-the-minute fluctuating prices. To increase awareness for MINI's fuel efficiency feature, Media Experts hijacked high search demand for “gas prices,” then positioned MINI directly within localized gas price ad copy, all in real-time. The campaign took home six international industry awards.

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Max Valiquette
Diamond Integrated
Marketing



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Mosaic



Candace Woods
Metro Ontario



Darren Yada
Rethink



Standard Pushbutton Start and Proximity Key Entry System



doug&partners

Nimbly addressing client needs

FOR TORONTO'S DOUG&PARTNERS, the motto "creativity for commerce" works on a couple of levels. "Every client requires a bespoke service solution to find the voice that will most effectively generate results," says executive creative director Matt Syberg-Olsen. "That's where we apply that creative thinking – whether it be how we strategize and build the team around the client or the creative output. Everybody jumps to the latter, but it's the creative way we approach their business that leads to success."

Later this year d&p will launch several campaigns that have been in the works for a year or more. "A decade ago agencies would wait for a comprehensive brief to drop," says VP managing director Caroline Kilgour. "Now we're co-authoring those briefs, identifying strategic opportunities and going all the way through to execution with clients. We're on long journeys with them and digging into the depth of their organizations."

The 36-staff agency, founded in 2002 by CEO Doug Robinson, thrives on diverse challenges.

"One prospective client needed a fast turnaround model on multiple, time-sensitive digital units," Kilgour recounts. "Working with other partners, they could get only a limited output in a certain amount of days. They said, 'If you can crack this nut, the workflow's yours.' So we did, and reduced production time by 50%. It was a unique ask. We'll solve anything from small production issues to problems of mass complexity with long timelines."

Built-in flexibility was required for a Honda campaign consisting of 23 x 15-second and six-second spots running as instream, outstream and social units demonstrating vehicle features with animated characters. Heated backseats hatch a nest of chicks; a "moonroof" is handy for a howling wolf; and sliding seats keep a dog and cat safely apart. While the six-second spots were forced view, media reporting

doug&partners created a series of 15-second online videos for the Ontario Honda Dealers Association using simple, entertaining animation to illustrate vehicle features. The spots performed well with high completion rates.

indicates the 15s had completion rates above industry benchmarks.

Honda required banners accompanying the videos that could be adjusted and redeployed to reflect pricing and rate changes.

"For Honda, everything needs to lead to a sale or drive traffic to the dealership, and we found a way to use technology to allow them to react to changes in the market," Syberg-Olsen says.

Sometimes the focus is on a single platform, as in a University of New Brunswick promotion to Snapchat's young demographic. Three units were produced, pointing to the school's unique experiences, information events and an open house. Users could swipe for more details. The campaign won gold at the Education Digital Marketing Awards.

d&p ramped up its online intelligence last year with the hire of Moxie Garrett as head of digital experience. She has used her analytics and digital-strategy expertise to help the shop customize creative work, adding another tool to its kit.

Meanwhile, it was OOH for the Indian River Reptile & Dinosaur Park outside of Peterborough, Ontario. Three posters enticed visitors to the facility, which houses reptiles in a natural setting. The posters humorously show reptiles in everyday human environments – at a backyard swimming pool, in a bed and in a shoe – accompanied by the caption "It's better if you visit them."

"We're incredibly flexible in terms of our skill set," says Kilgour.

"We're doing a lot of work that falls outside of the traditional engagement you would have seen with agencies in the past, and that has led to conversations with many different companies. We're always happy to answer another call, though."



Above left: A reminder from the Indian River Reptile & Dinosaur Park that it's far better to visit the reptiles than vice-versa.

Above right: The University of New Brunswick's three-ad Snapchat campaign captured gold at the Education Digital Marketing Awards.



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Dr. Oetker asked for a contest to give away a diamond ring. G&G delivered a multi-tiered program that also helps romantics write songs for their crushes. The ongoing campaign received more than 44,000 entries and 24.2 million impressions.

Giants & Gentlemen

Large network capabilities housed in a nimble Indie

MANY INDEPENDENT AGENCIES begin life with the bold swagger of a startup. A few hot creatives and strategists strike out on their own, start nimble, experiment and adopt “fail fast” attitudes. But time tends to temper much of that verve as markets change and the agency’s headcount grows.

But Giants & Gentlemen’s indie spirit has endured. In fact, it’s brought tremendous success.

When Alanna Nathanson, Natalie Armata and Gino Cantalini founded Giants & Gentlemen in 2012, they wanted to build an agency that could serve brands as comprehensively as any multinational could. They certainly had the experience to do so; as co-CDs, Nathanson and Armata built reputations at hot shops like TAXI and Leo Burnett, winning major creative awards along the way. Cantalini, meanwhile, held leadership marketing roles at TELUS, Labatt, Molson Coors, Campbell’s and Colgate.

But as entrepreneurs at heart, the founders couldn’t help but adopt a “grow or die” attitude, as Nathanson puts it. That combination of experience and start-up energy has proven a winner.

“After eight years of growth and wins, we’ve hit a new stride,” Nathanson says. The agency has expanded its business in unique ways and proven it can adapt to market needs.

The last year has seen the Toronto agency forge a number of new partnerships with brands such as Harvey’s, Enercare, Maple Online Health and cannabis retailer ERBN Green.

But existing partnerships have also increased in scope. Mac’s convenience stores had worked with the agency since 2014 but put its account into review when it began converting its English-market locations to the Circle K banner (which owners Alimentation Couche-Tard acquired in 2003). Giants & Gentlemen not only

company under the direction of industry veteran Rob Tunnicliff, to produce all of the agency’s video work.

In order to ensure they can deliver fully integrated campaigns, G&G partnered with PUSH media and brought them in-house. “Not only does it make planning and execution seamless, but PUSH has exclusive Canadian rights to proprietary international AI technology that has proven to make performance media twice as effective on average,” says Cantalini.

Giants & Gentlemen also put its money where its mouth is, developing and launching Giants & Gentlemen Old Tom Gin. “This allows us to continue to broaden our perspectives,” says Armata, “You can’t truly understand your clients’ challenges unless you live them.” As you might expect, the product’s branding has won design awards, but the gin itself has also won two Golden SIP Awards.

And it’s not just brands who are signing on with the agency. Top-tier talent is also signing on to work with this growing team.

Adam Gulyas recently became director of the agency’s digital operations. As the founding engineer at Turnstyle Analytics, Gulyas would go on to win Cannes Lions and Clios for interactive work with hip-hop superstar Drake. His creative talents have also seen him contribute to projects with Ariana Grande, Bruno Mars and Nike.

Doug Potwin, formerly the strategy lead at Ogilvy and Camp Jefferson, has also recently joined as vice-president, head of strategy. And Trevor O’Neill has come aboard as content designer and studio lead.

“We know we have something special,” Nathanson says. “Our team knows it and the industry is discovering it. It’s grow or die here. As senior industry leaders, we love forging into new territory and innovating to better serve our clients’ businesses.”



After expanding its relationship with Circle K in Ontario, G&G kicked off the brand's first multi-channel campaign in the province focusing on its wide product selection and convenience.



The appearance of a happy relationship on social media may hide the truth. To illustrate this for the Assaulted Women's Hotline, this cutesy fake selfie filter video of a young couple changes to show the reality many women face.



The agency developed and launched Giants & Gentlemen Old Tom Gin, which has won multiple awards for both design and product, proving they know a thing or two about packaging and innovation.



"Yes It's Pizza" challenges perceptions of a freezer-aisle staple. This campaign for Dr. Oetker's veggie-crust pizza dares shoppers to discover just how much like traditional 'za this product really is.

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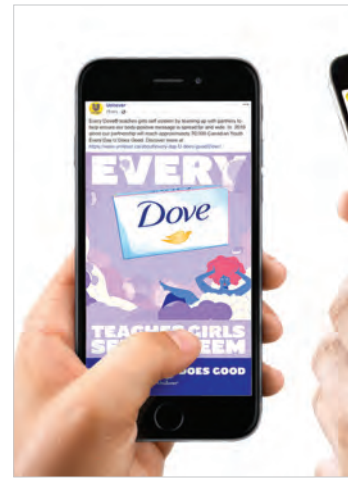
Some soaps can dry and irritate your skin. Which is why you should try Dove, a cleansing bar, specially formulated to be compatible with your skin.

Dove has a superior formulation, including 1/4 moisturizing cream, that makes it milder than soap. Its unique formula gives Dove a neutral pH7, the same as that of distilled water. This is closer to the slightly acidic pH5.5 of your skin than are soaps; most soaps are alkaline at pH9-11.

Look at the simple comparison above. Higher pH indicates higher alkalinity. The more alkaline a soap, the darker it will turn a strip of indicator paper. Notice - only pH neutral Dove leaves the paper clear.

You can see that Dove is different from soaps. Try Dove. We think you'll be, at least, mildly impressed.

Dove



UNILEVER KEEPS DOING GOOD

THE COMPANY CELEBRATES 90 YEARS OF FEARLESS LEADERSHIP AND A CULTURE OF CREATIVITY.

BY WILL NOVOSEDLIK

"The truest and highest form of enlightened self-interest requires that we pay the fullest regard to the interest and welfare of those around us, whose wellbeing we must bind up with our own and with whom we must share our prosperity." – William Hesketh Lever, 1900

It's tempting to read William Lever's quote and imagine that Unilever has always been purpose-driven. But while purpose may be in the company's DNA, it wasn't always conscious of it.

In 2009, when the CPG company's former CEO Paul Polman began his job, he spent the first three months visiting Unilever businesses around the world.

As the company's previous global VP Sharon Macleod tells it, "He would spend the whole day just talking to people at their desks or on the shop floor, getting to know the culture. And at the end he said, 'This company is different. They make decisions based on what's the right thing to do for people and for the environment but they don't realize they are doing it.' And that's when he crafted the Unilever Sustainable Living Plan."

Launched in 2010, the USLP is an initiative to achieve sustainable growth through purpose-led brands that help to build trust. Gary Wade, president of Unilever Canada, describes the USLP as having three pillars. "One is improving the livelihood of a billion people; under that we talk about hygiene, health and nutrition. The second is about cutting our environmental impact in half. That's what many people hear more about. The third is fairness to workers in the workplace, especially women."

And the company has not let its plan gather dust, especially during a time of crisis. In late March, Unilever



Clockwise: Dove Men+Care is helping fathers take paternity leave; the Dove “Litmus Test” surprised skeptics when it helped brand sales soar in the early ‘90s; Hellmann’s Real Food Movement is symbolic of Unilever’s purpose-led mission; most markets, except Canada, were afraid to run Dove’s “Tick Box”; campaign; the “Real Moms” work is an extension of “Real Beauty”; the “Every Day U Does Good” campaign from last year; Dove’s “Dear Future Dads” spot from 2018; an animated commercial promoting Unilever’s sustainable brands.

joined other CPG companies in shielding its workforce from the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It promised to continue paying its employees for up to three months as the world rides out the storm.

Beyond worker relief, Unilever has also donated millions to health orgs and agencies to create things like soap and bleach to fight the virus. After all, the company has a history in germ battling. Its Sunlight soap was originally developed by the Lever Brothers in the late 19th century as a way to introduce hygiene to the British working classes, many of whom had moved from the countryside in the thousands, taking up residence in industrializing cities and towns where their living conditions were squalid, cramped and disease-prone.

Over the years, Unilever has built brands that support its mission to increase its social impact and halve its environmental footprint. The company’s top 10 selling brands – such as Dove, Knorr, Lipton and Hellmann’s – are what it calls “Sustainable Living Brands,” those which have products that contribute to its goals.

To communicate its progress, in 2019, Unilever launched the “Every Day U Does Good” marketing platform, which highlights the impact its brands have on different issues. Knorr, for example, helps farmers

develop sustainable farming practices. Dove challenges the stereotypes about what beauty really means with its Self Esteem Fund. And Hellmann’s is now using 100% post-consumer recycled plastic for its packaging.

While all of Unilever’s brands are on a journey towards sustainability, its 28 Sustainable Living Brands are furthest ahead, growing 69% faster than the rest of the portfolio. “The rough math is that our brands with purpose are growing at 5%,” says Wade. “And I would say that in Canada, the growth rate on these brands is even higher.”

DEMANDING GREATNESS

The sense of purpose at Unilever is fueled by a strong creative culture. There are few clients who are spoken of so highly by agency people, and that is due to a long line of marketing executives inspired by a bold, charismatic figure named Peter Elwood.

The former president tells *strategy* that when he joined Unilever (Lever Brothers at the time) in 1988 as VP marketing, his boss gave him one job: “Build market share... not to worry about profits, just grow the business,” he says. “It helped that my boss was Philip Darnton, who had transferred from Lever Brothers in the U.K. to be president in Canada. He was appalled at our mundane advertising and challenged me and our agencies to do better.”

As a result, Elwood recalls collaborating more with its agencies and insisting that he sit in on creative briefings and presentations from start to finish. “My presence showed that I was serious about being more adventurous in accepting off the wall ideas in our creative product. Slowly but surely we started to put more interesting and entertaining advertising in print, on air and the radio... Word spread among agencies that we were doing stuff that creatives liked, so the top talent wanted to work on our business.”

Nancy Vonk was one of those creatives. She worked on Unilever as a CD at Ogilvy alongside Janet Kestin in the early ‘90s, and says Elwood (who retired after Kevin Boyce took over in 2003) “was a gamechanger who broke the mold and put Unilever Canada on the global marketing map. And he was willing to do what was right for Canada even if it was out of sync with global.”

An early example of that is the now-famous Dove “Litmus Test” campaign of 1991. In the brief, Elwood explained to Vonk and Kestin that Dove was not just an everyday soap. With its gentle cleansing formula developed during WWII to clean the skin of burn victims, Dove doesn’t strip away all oils from the skin. As part of the team briefing, Elwood told them that if



Courage is beautiful 

Amanda

Top and right:

An ode to medical workers and first responders, "Courage is Beautiful" was one of the most lauded campaigns during the coronavirus outbreak; Dove's "Firming" work was the catalyst for the Self Esteem Project.

you put a piece of litmus paper on a wet bar of soap it will turn blue, which is a sign of alkalinity shared by most harsh household cleaners. But on Dove's product, the litmus wouldn't turn colour, indicating it was Ph-neutral and free of alkaline. Every bar of soap Vonk and Kestin tested themselves turned litmus paper blue. They could literally see why Dove was the mildest bar on the market, and they wanted consumers to have the same opportunity, hence the "Litmus Test" campaign.

Up until that point, the standard formula for Dove ads was "It's $\frac{1}{4}$ moisturizing cream." Decades of testimonials featured women praising how much their husbands liked their skin after using it. Elwood, Vonk and Kestin decided to give women objective proof of the bar's differentiating mildness. Unilever's head office in New York was not pleased that Elwood and his team had departed from the 45-year tradition of saying "It's $\frac{1}{4}$ moisturizing cream." David Ogilvy himself wrote a letter to his Toronto agency saying "science won't sell!" But Elwood was confident enough in his instincts about Canadian consumers to approve the idea without asking

permission. Mike Welling, who was brand manager at the time, says "the concept had already been used to target dermatologists in the U.S. but it had never been used directly against consumers. So, in our eyes it was already approved."

Despite their initial misgivings, head office was soon impressed by the campaign's enormous success. Sales of Dove went through the roof while its main competitors declined. It was subsequently deployed in 33 countries, not to mention cleaning up at Cannes, Communication Arts and The One Show. According to Macleod, it is still being introduced to new markets today, 30 years later.

Elwood's boldness set the tone for the next generation of creative marketing leaders. People like Mike Welling (later a partner at Doug&Partners and now an independent strategic consultant); Rob Guenette (CEO at TAXI); Dave Chiavegato (partner at Grip); Geoff Craig (CMO at the Heart and Stroke Foundation); Mark Wakefield (SVP Marketing at Ferrero USA) and Macleod (now a corporate director for IGM Financial) were inspired by Elwood's leadership and legacy to continually raise the creative bar on brands like Dove, Hellmann's, Sunlight, Knorr and Q Tips.

Agency-side, this team of marketing stars was matched by a whole generation of award-winning creative leaders

including Vonk and Kestin (now co-founders of consultancy Swim), Elspeth Lynn (CCO at Geometry), Judy John (CCO at Edelman), Chris Dacyshyn and Julie Markle (co-ECDs at Bleublancrouge), Neil McOstrich (partner at Cleansheet) and Mark Stoiber (independent consultant). It's a veritable hall of legends.

One of the challenges for many of these creative teams was to keep up with the creativity of the client team.

Take briefs, for example. Vonk talks about a Dove brief in which she and Kestin were "blindfolded and driven to an undisclosed location which turned out to be a military barracks. The client team was dressed in army fatigues and the brief – all about taking out the enemy – was barked at us like a string of military commands."

The key insight that drove campaigns to success and recognition was often embedded in the briefs themselves. The litmus paper is a great example. And when Hellmann's was run by Geoff Craig, a Unilever veteran of 17 years, his key point was that the product was just three simple ingredients: eggs, vinegar and oil. Hence the origin of "Real Mayonnaise," an inspiration

for what is now known as the Real Food Movement, founded in 2007 to connect Canadian families to “real” food through initiatives like community gardens, grants to schools to replace processed food with fresh meal options, educational programs and a series of documentaries in partnership with CanWest.

Elwood also instilled a culture of courage and confidence. Rob Guenette held several marketing roles at Unilever from 1986 to 1999. He tells the story of a Q Tips creative presentation: “Ogilvy came in with three concepts. I asked, ‘If you only had one to show me, which would it be?’ So they showed me it and I said, ‘Ok let’s do it.’ I didn’t even want to see the other ones. And it won a ton of awards. That really crystallized for me the trust that we had with each other.”

“Peter would always say to his people, your agency is your partner,” says Vonk. “This was very unusual. It still is. The client team was taught to be ambitious, to listen, to be open-minded and to have fun. We had all kinds of

idealized .0001% of the population, which is typically presented in advertising and the media.

Originally headed up by Silvia Lagnado, global SVP for Dove, from 2001 to 2005, the “Campaign for Real Beauty” engaged five Ogilvy offices from around the world to contribute different elements. The first piece of creative that came out of the London office was called “Tick Box.” It consisted of the image of a “real” woman (as opposed to an idealized one) next to two tick boxes that asked the viewer to choose between attributes like “Fit or Fab” or “Withered or Wonderful.” Canada was the only market willing to run it. Other markets hesitated.

“Having worked both in the U.S. and on global, I can tell you the degree of risk in those bigger markets is much higher than it is here,” explains Macleod. “What if you spent \$10 million and it didn’t sell anything? Analysts would be talking about that. But in Canada we had the ability to run with things because it felt right.” Canada became the test bed for breaking the norms.

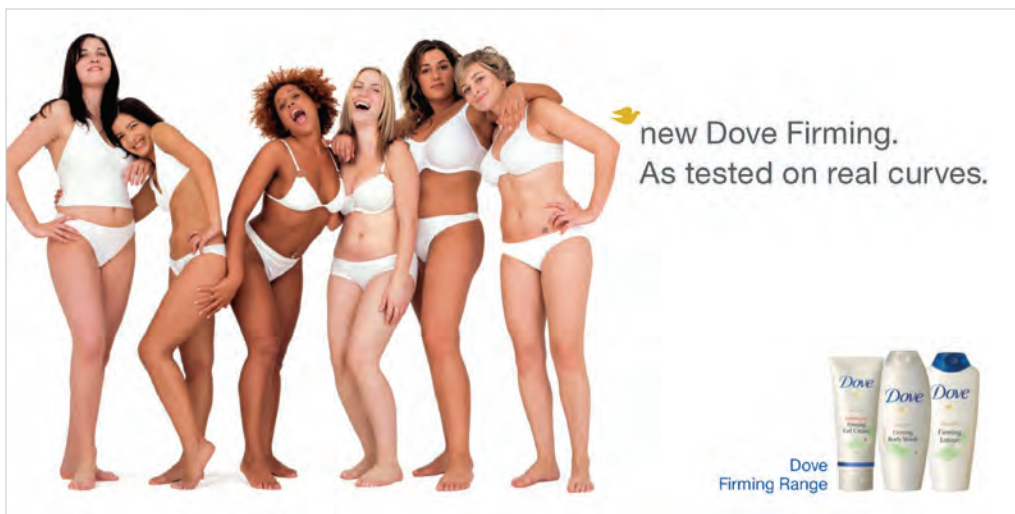
“We spent \$1 million in one month on outdoor [for the ‘Tick Box’ campaign] and it was so successful that it was immediately picked up by the U.S.,” adds Macleod. She says it was immediately followed by the U.K.-produced “Firming” campaign – which “everybody refers to as the ‘real women in white underwear’ ads” – with a Canada-specific execution. “As that was happening, we very quickly realized that it was one thing to raise awareness but we needed to follow that up with action. People were literally sending in cards and letters asking,

‘How can I help?’ And we were like, ‘Help do what?’ People were begging for brand engagement.”

“That’s when Dove Self Esteem started,” says Macleod. “We realized it wasn’t enough to talk about it, we had to do something about it. We created workshops on self-esteem for girls but we needed to get bums in seats. So we engaged Vonk and Kestin, who worked with [ACD] Tim Piper and [CD] Mike Kirkland to make ‘Dove Evolution’ and put it on YouTube to see what would happen.”

“Evolution” landed at the top of the platform’s most watched list. It was not only the first viral video in the history of advertising – it was the first video to go viral at all. You could say it inspired the word “viral.”

“Real Beauty” and the “Evolution” spots went far beyond what advertising does in the world. It changed girls’ and women’s image of themselves. It inspired a



people work on that account over the years and they all embraced the culture Peter fostered. Why wouldn’t you? The work was world-class, and they made doing it a joy.”

CREATIVITY MEETS PURPOSE

There are so many groundbreaking Unilever campaigns from the last 30 years that it would be impossible to talk about all of them here. But there is one brand in particular that exemplifies the unique collision of creativity and purpose that Unilever Canada has become known for globally: Dove.

Starting in 2004, the Dove “Campaign for Real Beauty” set out to redefine the way women looked at themselves. It changed the wider culture outside of advertising and commerce and reached people on an everyday level. The message was that real beauty need not be defined by the

surge in authentic casting in TV and film. It embraced diversity. It drove change around how dysfunctional the beauty category can be and reframed how important it is to be valued beyond just how you look. And it put Canada on the map as a marketing gamechanger.

CREATIVITY GETS REAL

By 2007, Unilever had staked a legitimate claim to authenticity, a coveted brand attribute that's difficult to achieve. Just as Dove elevated reality over fantasy, Hellmann's drove the conversation around real food.

Chris Dacyshyn, formerly an AD at Ogilvy, remembers coming up with the idea of the Hellmann's Real Food

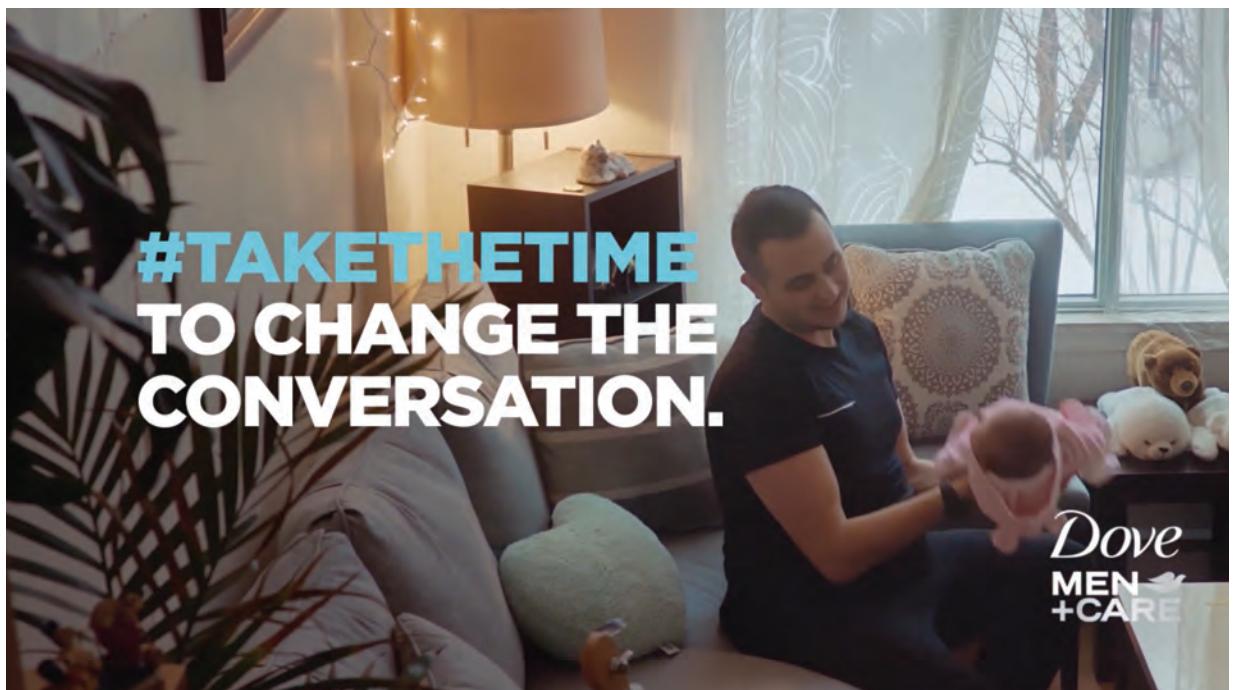
and it can result in a strong product story that generates financial growth, why wouldn't we?"

KEEPING IT REAL

Unilever's purpose-led marketing continues to be seen in Dove Men+Care's "#RealDads" and Baby Dove's "#RealMoms." The former does to stereotypes about fatherhood and masculinity what "Real Beauty" did for stereotypes of femininity. Likewise, #RealMoms started a conversation around the false depiction of 'perfect' moms often seen in the media and advertising.

With new Canadian federal legislation introducing a five-week paternity leave policy, Dove Men+Care

Right: Led by former global VP Sharon MacLeod, the Dove Men+Care "#TakeTheTime" campaign looked to change the conversation and stereotypes around fatherhood and masculinity.



Movement. Her first execution was to turn parking lots into communal gardens and gather stories from people who wanted a plot in the garden. People got to farm the gardens in cities across Canada. They had more people interested in plots than the brand could accommodate.

And at a school in Alberta, Unilever ripped out its deep fryer and replaced it with equipment to make real food. It also brought in celebrity chef Chuck Hughes to show them a whole new healthy way to eat. Ogilvy then filmed a monster truck crushing the deep fryer.

The results of the viral video were significant, with a 10% increase in sales in 2007, 9% in 2008 and 15% in 2009, all well above the pre-campaign growth of only 3%. "Unilever began to notice that there was more financial gain in doing good than there was in doing product ads," says Dacyshyn. "If we can do some good

recently introduced "#TakeTheTime," urging dads to take leave and lend support to the campaign online.

As for Hellmann's, it continues to do good through its Real Food Rescue. For instance, when it learned that Canadians waste enough food every minute to fill an MLSE stadium, Hellmann's and Ogilvy rescued food that would have been thrown away from stadium suites.

Hearing these stories and what they meant to Unilever's brands and their champions, one realizes what a massive impact they had. So many positive social and environmental outcomes, so much growth, so many awards. There's no question Unilever Canada ushered in a golden age of marketing innovation, raising the bar for the rest of the world. And the company couldn't have done that without discovering its authentic purpose. Long may its mission continue. 📌



ATOMICON & ATOMIC AWARDS | 2020

The Toronto conference was followed by an awards gala on March 3, which also celebrated the Creative Report Card and New Establishment winners.



1. Co-chairs Andrea Hunt of Arterra Wines and Roehl Sanchez of BIMM. | 2. Rethink's Ian Grais and Chris Staples made a rare appearance to pick up their CRC apples for #1 CDs and #1 Agency. | 3. BBDO's Mike Nugent and Ogilvy's Tom Kenny win top CRC designer and planner. | 4. Michael Romaniuk (with his family to his left and Zulu bosses Mike Sutton and Zak Mroueh to his right) accepts a New Establishment medal. | 5. The Content Advisory's Cathy McKnight presents ways to make content marketing measurable. | 6. The CRC's top AD and CWs Debbie Chan and David Mueller from Narrative and Bensimon Byrne. | 7. Rethink's Caleb Goodman. | 8. FCB/Six goes back to the Grand Prix podium for Black & Abroad's "Go Back To Africa." | 9. Molson's Jessica Vieira Teixeira with her New Establishment award. | 10. Travis Cowdy and Lyrandia Martin-Evans from Dentsu with Matt Kohler from Clorox. | 11. WGSN director and keynote speaker Andrea Bell. | 12. Cossette Media's Brooke Leland.

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