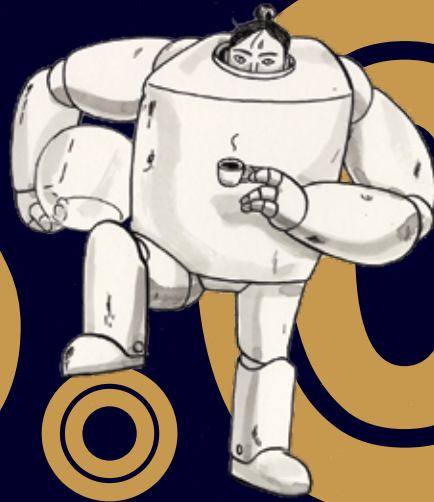


strategy™

bold
vision
brand
new
ideas

CMO360

**Marketers suit up for
another transformational
year as their mandates
grow fast and vast
at Sobeys, Arterra,
Canadian Tire, BMO
and SAAQ**



**WILL EUPHORIC ADS CURE
AIRLINES' PANDEMIC WOES?**

**HOW TO BALANCE PROFIT
WITH PURPOSE**

WINTER 2022 • \$6.95



The Globe and Mail presents the 2022 Young Lions Competition

YOUNG AND HUNGRY WINS.

THE SEARCH FOR THE BEST YOUNG ADVERTISING AND CREATIVE STARS IN CANADA



Calling all advertising and marketing professionals age 31 and younger. Team up with a partner and compete in the virtual Canadian Young Lions Competition over the weekend of February 26, 2022. Compete in the categories of Print, Film, Digital, Media or Marketers. The winning teams go on to represent Canada at the virtual Global Young Lions Competition to compete against the most creative teams from all over the world.

Register by February 21, 2022 • globeandmailyounglions.ca

OFFICIAL FESTIVAL REPRESENTATIVE



**YOUNG LIONS
COMPETITIONS**



CANADIAN PROGRAM PARTNERS

strategy



* The 2022 Young Lions Competition ("Young Lions") are sponsored by The Globe and Mail Inc. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. EST on January 7, 2022 and ends at 11:59 p.m. EST on February 21, 2022 and submission entry deadlines are as early as 9:00 a.m. EST on February 26, 2022. Open to Canadian citizens or permanent residents of Canada who have paid a non-refundable CAD\$75 Registration Fee, who at the time of entry are at least the legal age of majority in their province or territory of residence and are not older than 31 years of age prior to June 24, 2022, are able to and compete at the virtual 2022 Global Young Lions Competition during the May 16-June 7th timeframe. Further, to enter Young Lions you must be a professional employed by or freelancing for a creative communications, advertising, or digital agency for the Digital, Print and Film Categories; or employed by or freelancing for: (A) a media agency; or (B) specific in-house media department in an agency, for the Media Category. Further, to enter Marketers you must be a professional employed (i.e. not freelance) in the marketing department of a company that engages the services of a creative communications, advertising, or digital agency. Any competition entries must meet the requirements set out in the rules and be submitted prior to the applicable entry deadline. Additional eligibility and entry requirements may apply, including the signing of a release. If you register on behalf of your team, your registration form must specify your second team member. Limit of two members per team. You may only be a member of one team. Limit of one competition entry per team. One Finalist per Category in Young Lions and will be announced as the winning team at the CMDC Event in April, 2022. The prize for each winning team consists of: (a) registration and participation in the 2022 virtual Global Young Lions Competition to represent Canada; (b) two (2) full-week Young Lions registration passes to attend the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity 2022 (the "Festival"); (c) round-trip economy airfare for the two (2) Eligible Entrants of the Winning Team from the major airport closest to each such Eligible Entrant's residence to Nice, France, including return airport transfers; (d) at least six (6) nights' accommodation in a single standard room, in Cannes, France during the Festival; (e) in the event the Festival in Cannes, France is canceled and/or travel restrictions are in place and/or winning team members do not want to travel to the Festival, each winning team member will receive in place of attending the Festival a prize of \$5,000.00 cash per winning team. For the avoidance of doubt each winning team member will receive \$2,500.00 cash. Approximate retail value of the Prize is CAD\$7,500 dollars based on a Toronto departure. Odds of winning the Prize depend on the number of teams registered in Young Lions per Category and the number and quality of entries submitted respectively. For full rules and details on eligibility and entry requirements please visit: <https://globeandmailyounglions.ca>. All logos and brand names are the property of their respective owners.



Some brands are reeling in their focus on high-frequency sales to achieve their eco goals, using strategies like encouraging consumers to buy fewer, but better-made goods that last.

10

Survival strategies

How the aviation industry is creating some sense of normalcy in an effort to lure consumers back to travel.

15

Marketers of the Year

Another transformational group of leaders, this time from Sobeys, Arterra, SAAQ, Canadian Tire and BMO.

36

A tricky high-wire act

Can sales and sustainability co-exist? Experts weigh in on the struggle to juggle both profit and purpose.

4 Editorial CMOs as change leaders • **6 Upfront** Holograms (if we can even call them that) suddenly appear, plus the craft beer wars heats up with new NoLo players and what's in store for 2022 • **8 Creative trend** Food and bev brands expand their consumption horizons with experimental pairings • **38 Tribute** McDonald's Canada celebrates 55 years of menu inventions and marketing innovation • **66 Back Page** The best thing to grace restaurants since sliced bread



ON THE COVER:

Marketing department heads are entering a new era as their roles skyrocket with expanding responsibilities. They're morphing into better, stronger versions of their former selves as they prepare to take on their organization's hairiest problems. These change agents are being called to the plate to drive both sales and business growth. And they're eager to take on the challenge. But it's not easy being a marketer, burdened with a somewhat disengaged workforce in a hybrid workplace, tasked with aligning corporate culture with the values of a brand. Artist **Graham Roumieu** illustrated the transformation they're undergoing, pointing to our 2021 Marketers of the Year who've proven they know how to deliver the goods.

ILLUSTRATION: GRAHAM ROUMIEU

The marketer of the future is already here

Prior to coronavirus hitting the fan, news media, pundits, and the like had begun to question the role of the CMO. At one point companies were putting their chief marketer positions on the chopping block. In 2019, Johnson & Johnson, McDonald's and Uber scrapped plans to replace outgoing global CMOs. For these companies, it was that martech had taken precedence and the role needed to be filled by a chief information officer, or that duties had grown exponentially (again, thanks to martech) and was just simply too much for one person to manage on their own.

But with every report that once threatened the extinction of the role, there was a marketer helping to lead transformational change on the digital front. And that includes the brand leaders from our 2021 group of Marketers of the Year, many of whom are behind new digital and data systems at their organizations, from Sobeys to Arterra and Canadian Tire. While they're busy proving that chief marketers are worth their weight in gold by upskilling and leading digital strategies, the next phase of their role is already underway.

CMOs, in their first life, were the purveyors of products and services, tapping into our human emotions to influence decisions. With the next rendition, came the aforementioned need to go beyond managing a marketing strategy to using data to make sense of personalization at scale. The next juncture is creating conditions for the CMO 3.0, a transformational stage – set further alight by the pandemic – where brand leaders are an equal part of marketing as they are sustainable business growth.

Back when the corona-crisis started, we heard accounts of marketers helping their businesses give birth to survival strategies that gave them a better chance of making it out on the other side. One that comes to mind is Earl's Kristin Vekteris, who told *strategy* that she and three other heads in the restaurant's operations, culinary and procurement departments (dubbed the "innovation team") developed a revenue stream that saw the company enter a whole new territory. Earl's Grocery was born out of its own supply chain problem – selling excess food from lockdowns to shoppers navigating empty store shelves – and the marketing head was at the root of its birth.

The last two years were arguably a catalyst for marketing being given a more influential seat at the executive table. But evolutions are a slow and constant process. And 2021 Marketer of the Year Catherine Roche at BMO is an example of how marketers have been morphing into change leaders for some time. Roche was one of the key architects in finding and communicating the bank's reason for being. She led a full company and market investigation into the future direction of the brand, and was given reins to set a new purpose-led strategy that influences how the bank does business from here on out.

One thing those earlier reports got right is that, indeed, marketers' remits are growing fast and vast. But judging from this year's MOYs, they've long been preparing for the challenge.

Jennifer Horn
Editor & Content Director, *strategy*

strategy

WINTER 2022 VOLUME 33, ISSUE 1
strategyonline.ca

EVP, PUBLISHER | **MARY MADDEVER** | mmaddever@brunico.com
EDITOR, CONTENT DIRECTOR | **JENNIFER HORN** | jhorn@brunico.com
ART DIRECTOR | **TIM DAVIN** | tdavin@brunico.com
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER | **LISA FAKTOR** | lfaktor@brunico.com
NEWS EDITOR | **JOSH KOLM** | jkolm@brunico.com
SENIOR REPORTER | **JUSTIN CRANN** | jcrann@brunico.com
REPORTER | **CHRIS LOMBARDO** | clombardo@brunico.com
WRITERS | **MARK DILLON, DANNY KUCHARSKY, WILL NOVOSIEDLIK, EGIN WELDON**
ACCOUNT MANAGER | **NUPUR PUROHIT** | npurohit@brunico.com
MARKETING CO-ORDINATOR | **NATALYA CHERNOVA** | nchernova@brunico.com

CORPORATE

PRESIDENT & CEO | **RUSSELL GOLDSTEIN** | rgoldstein@brunico.com
EVP & EDITORIAL DIRECTOR | **MARY MADDEVER** | mmaddever@brunico.com
SVP & PUBLISHER, REALSCREEN | **CLAIRE MACDONALD** | cmacdonald@brunico.com
SVP & PUBLISHER, KIDSCREEN | **JOCELYN CHRISTIE** | jchristie@brunico.com
DIRECTOR, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION | **MICHELLE PLASKON** | mplaskon@brunico.com
CREATIVE SERVICES & DIST. MANAGER | **ADRIANA ORTIZ** | aortiz@brunico.com
CUSTOMER SUPPORT SUPERVISOR | **CHRISTINE MCNALLEY** | cmcnalley@brunico.com

HOW TO REACH US

Strategy, 366 Adelaide Street West, Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5V 1R9
Tel: (416) 408-2300 or 1-888-BRUNICO (1-888-278-6426) Fax: (416) 408-0870
www.strategyonline.ca

CUSTOMER CARE

To order a subscription, visit strategyonline.ca/subscribe. To make a change to an existing subscription, please contact us by email: strategycustomer@brunico.com.
Tel: (416) 408-2448 Fax: (416) 408-0249, 8799 Highway 89, Alliston, ON L9R 1V1.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

STRATEGY IS PUBLISHED SEVEN TIMES PER YEAR BY BRUNICO COMMUNICATIONS LTD.
In Canada: One year CA\$80.00 Two years CA\$144.00
(HST included. Registration #856051396 RT)
Single copy price in Canada is CA\$6.95. Please allow four weeks for new subscriptions and address changes.

COPYRIGHT AND TRADEMARK

STRATEGY and the tagline "Bold vision brand new ideas" are trademarks of Brunico Communications Ltd. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reproduced from STRATEGY in whole or in part without written permission. Reprint requests should be sent to rgoldstein@brunico.com. © 2018 Brunico Communications Ltd.

POSTMASTER NOTIFICATION

Canadian Postmaster, send undeliverables and address changes to:
Strategy, 8799 Highway 89, Alliston, ON L9R 1V1. strategycustomer@brunico.com
U.S. Postmaster, send undeliverables and address changes to: Strategy PO BOX 1103
Niagara Falls NY 14304 Printed in Canada. Canada Post Agreement No. 40050265.
ISSN: 1187-4309.

Member of 

Funded by the Government of Canada





THANK YOU.

nabs is especially grateful this year to our **National Fundraising Committee** led by Dave Lafond, CEO No Fixed Address who answered our rallying cry and gathered a wide group of top industry executives from many of Canada's leading agencies and for the first time, the client marketing community to help raise critical funds for the organization and develop a longer term plan of support for nabs and those in our industry in need of our help. This Committee is a first for nabs in its 38 year fundraising history.

Our Committee Members:

No Fixed Address: Dave Lafond

Publicis: Brett McIntosh

Western Market: John Voiles

Quebec: Daniel Rabinowicz

Local Collective: Matt Litzinger

BIMM: Mike Da Ponte

Cossette: Janis Lindenbergs

Rethink: Dhavall Bhatt

Hello Fresh: Candy Lee

BBDO: Rebecca Flaman

ROM: Lori Davison

Sobeys: Erika DeHaas

Starcom: Christine Saunders

FCB: Tyler Turnbull

2021 was a record year for nabs providing essential mental health training, programs and services as we all grappled with the impact of the ongoing pandemic on our community and their families. A roller coaster of a year of relentless adaptation, changing protocols, vaccine roll outs, and more changes before a much needed holiday break and rest. Due to the generosity of our 2021 donors, nabs is poised and ready for whatever 2022 has in store for our community.

Major Donors

A2C, ABCOM, Ad Club of Toronto, Ad Standards, Agence dada, Agence Bob, Altitude C, Anderson DDB, Anomaly, American Marketing Association, Another Sellout, Apex PR, Arrivals + Departures, Bell Canada, BBDO, Black Press, Boule de Neige, Broken Heart Love Affair, C2 International, CABR, Cairns O'Neil, Central Station, Alvin Chow, CMA, Canadian Management Centre, Collectif Humanise, Cossette, DAAC, DDB, Djud Design, Espace M Inc., Ethnicity Matters, Farris Family Foundation, FCB/FCB SIX, FUSE Create, Gestion Police, Grey, GTB, Havas Worldwide, ICA, IPG Canada, Janice & Mark Sherman Family Foundation, Joanne Trudeau & Daniel Rabinowicz Fund, Kellough Co, Leo Burnett, Ig2, McCann Worldgroup Canada, Mediabrand, Mirego, MiQ Digital, National Public Relations, No Fixed Address, OMD, Peloton Media Inc., phd, Plus Company, Projet Team Forward, Publicis, Rec Media, Slight Family Foundation, Stephen Sienko, Stephen Thomas Ltd., TamTam/TBWA, Tank, The Garden, The Taligent Group, The&Partnership, Time+Space Media, Touchel, Vortex Solution, Wasserman + Partners, Zulu Alpha Kilo, and hundreds of individuals.

Media Sale Donors

Adapt Media, Airtime Television Sales, Allvision, Astral, Bell Media, Black Press, Branded Cities, Captivate, CBC, Central Ontario Broadcasting, CHCH TV, CHEK, Cogeco, Corus Media, CTN Radio, Glacier Media, The Globe and Mail, Harrowsmith Magazine, Indie 88, Koolfm/rock95, NHL Digital, NTV/CJON, Outfront, Pattison, Pelmorex, Postmedia, Quebecor, Radio-Canada, Readers Digest, Rogers Sports & Media, RougeMedia, Saltwire, St Joseph Media Magazines, Stingray, The Edge, The Score Media & Gaming Inc., The Toronto Star, Vendo Media, YES TV, Zoomer Media Limited.

Media Customers

Amplifi Canada, Apex Exchange, Atypic, Blue Ant Media Solutions, Carat Canada, Corporation Génacol Canada inc, Cossette, DentsuAegis, DentsuX, Distribution Fragrance Plus, Environmental Defence, Epitaph Group, Excelsior, Gion Records, Greenbelt Foundation, Havas Media, HearingLife Canada Ltd., Hello Theo, Horizon Media, Initiative Media, Innocean Worldwide Canada Inc., Jungle Media, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of Canada, Media Experts, Mediacom, MightyHive, Mindshare, Novus, OMD Canada, Parfums à Rabais, phd, Publicis Media, Saatchi & Saatchi, Sheridan College, Shopify Spark Foundry, The Greenbelt Foundation, UM, Vizéum Canada, VMC Media, Wavemaker, Zenith.

To learn more about nabs, please visit nabs.org.





THE RISE (AND RETURN) OF HOLOGRAMS

By Eoin Weldon

The marketing industry has flirted with holograms for the last two decades. At one point they were deemed the “next big thing” for brands to communicate with consumers, yet mysteriously they never fully caught on. However, they seem to be making a comeback, with several brands recently experimenting with the 3D format.

Johnnie Walker gave its products the holographic treatment in LCBO stores to engage shoppers. Toronto’s Eaton Centre used the unique technology in early December to help people “shop the look” for the holiday season. Loblaws also got in on the action by installing holographic displays in some of its stores to mark the return of its *PC Insiders Report* magazine.

Lance So, customer marketing manager at Diageo, says Johnnie Walker chose the tech for its ability to educate consumers around tasting notes and holiday cocktails, creating intimate one-to-one interactions without physically being face-to-face, making it pandemic-friendly.

The rise in digital signage over the last few years could make the comeback for holographic displays a successful one, particularly as the pandemic forces marketers to choose media channels that quickly respond to changing conditions. The global digital signage market was valued at CAD\$28.3 billion in Oct. 2021 and is expected to be worth CAD\$50 billion by 2030.

Being a technology purist, Mitch Joel doesn’t view the displays by Johnny Walker, Loblaws and the like as true holograms. The founder of Six Pixels Group sees them as a mixture of AR and “cool parlour tricks,” but does appreciate and laud their usefulness as a marketing tool.

“What are brands ultimately trying to do here? They are trying to generate attention,” says Joel. “So anything that looks bright and three-dimensional is very engaging and captivating.”

“These displays get companies a lot of PR at the end of the day so anything we see that gives a company an edge is always popular and technology is great for that. We’ve had more amplification through COVID of the fact that these digital tools exist and have been innovated on. So should we be surprised that we’re seeing a resurgence of technology from the past? No.”

As for the future of holographic displays, Joel says he believes in “a screenless future, one where projections and our access to information won’t be based off of me pulling something out of my pocket or looking at my watch or laptop. I foresee projections and access to technology and holograms being everywhere.”

With files from Chris Lombardo

Above: Johnnie Walker added a personal touch to LCBO stores with holographic displays that spoke to shoppers about tasting notes and cocktails.

THE NOLO BEER WARS HEATS UP

By Mark Dillon

A new wave of craft breweries is offering up NoLo (no or low alcohol) bevies that are not only healthier than traditional beer, but actually taste good – a long time knock on the category. These indie brands are occupying greater shelf space beside offerings from global giants such as Heineken 0.0 and Bud Zero as they chase segments that may have previously turned up their noses at non-alcoholic suds.

“People are starting to adopt the category at different age groups,” says Diane Laberge, VP marketing and e-commerce at Calgary’s Partake Brewing. “In part that comes from people in their 30s and 40s deciding they’re not going to drink alcoholic beer. And we’re also starting to see adopters from a younger generation that have an [unfavourable] relationship with alcohol.”

Partake made *The Globe and Mail*’s list of top-growing companies with 2020 revenue of \$5M-\$10M



and topped a recent *Food & Wine Magazine* list of best non-alcoholic beers with its Blonde Ale. It markets its portfolio as the lowest-calorie non-alcoholic beer available, with 10-30 calories and 0-8 grams of carbs per 355 ml can. Its core SKUs are all non-alcoholic and far more wide-ranging than what mainstream beer brands are offering consumers, with varieties including Pale, IPA, Red, Stout and Blonde.

“Innovation plays an important role for us. We’re listening to consumer feedback and committed to improving the variety in this category,” says LaBerge.

Creative agency Lg2 collaborated with Partake on its 2021 “Cheers to Adulting” campaign, which



includes humorous ads that sing the praises of no hangovers and being able to enjoy a beer on the job.

Meanwhile, Ontario's Rally Beer Company, which launched in 2020, relies on social, earned media, experiential and grassroots efforts to get the word out. The company's name fittingly suggests a bike rally, with the idea having come to CEO Alan Wood while on a 760km bike

trek. Rally markets its beers to the mountain biking community and other active consumers. It offers two alcoholic brands and a non-alcoholic Dry Run Pale Ale, which is brewed with potassium salts that provide electrolytes, so it can function not only as that celebratory beverage after a hard workout, but as a recovery drink as well.

"Our community was screaming for it," Wood says. "We always wanted to be a low and no-alcohol brewery. A lot of people in the endurance sports world with whom we connected might be training hard and abstaining from alcohol. Maybe they want to crush a beer after a 10K, but maybe throughout training they still want to celebrate the little wins as well."

Rally has found ways to be present at action and endurance sports events during the pandemic. "Because of COVID-19 we've had to go small," Wood says. "For the first event we did, we hid a cooler in the woods in Collingwood and then put the GPS coordinates out to one of the trail running clubs so the participants could grab a beer, take a selfie with it and have some fun."

According to the Non-Alcoholic Beer Global Market Report 2021, the market is projected to grow to \$23 billion by 2025. Meanwhile, NielsenIQ notes that non-alcoholic craft beer in the U.S. grew by 278% in 2020. However, David Ian Gray, principal at national retail advisory DIG360, foresees slow and steady growth for craft NoLo brands – with one hurdle to clear.

"If you look at how some of the craft breweries have gained prominence, it's been by exposing people to their beers

at bars and restaurants," Gray says. "And then they can pick it up at the grocery store or visit the brewery. But the on-premise sales are not what drives that; they need to be selling elsewhere. One of the keys is to see a bar or restaurant offer [craft NoLo beers] on tap. I have not seen that happen yet."



Top: Rally is filling a white space in the non-alcoholic category, with a beer that caters to athletes.

Above: Partake has made innovation bets on several beer types and styles.

TRENDS TO WATCH

For the interest of marketers and product innovators, we gathered some of the more intriguing signals of change from WGSN's Top Trends report for 2022. As you can see, the firm is known to speculate on some of the more radical trends.

By Will Novosedlik



A WATERLESS WORLD

One in 10 people worldwide is unable to access clean water, and that number is bound to climb. The solution? Waterless washing. Waterless product innovations are part of a more minimalist approach to hygiene where people focus on washing only the smelliest parts of their body – pits, bits, holes and soles – to reduce water consumption and damage to their microbiome. WGSN cites Swair's Showerless Shampoo that cleans without suds or rinsing and Hanni's no-water hybrid Shave Pillow which enables users to remove hair anywhere.

WEAR CONDITIONING

As temperatures rise, performance and athletic garments that monitor and reduce body heat will be a must-have. "E-textiles" provide personalised temp control, with the added benefit of reducing air conditioning's environmental impact. Ralph Lauren experimented with climate control garments at the recent Olympic games. The smart material could be of interest to performance and personal care categories in the short term – and maybe every other garment category in the long term when things get really hot and sticky.

PIMP MY AVATAR

According to WGSN, designing and selling items that don't exist IRL directly to avatars allows brands to enter the metaverse, sidestep supply chains, and open up new revenue streams. By 2022, the "in-game skins" market will soar to \$50 billion. Companies such as Bitmoji and Genies allow users to create and customize their virtual identities, with brands debuting exclusive digital products in-game on platforms like Roblox and Fortnite.

LOYALTY IS POINTLESS

As more companies accept cryptocurrency, digital rewards programs are on the rise. Mastercard is about to allow customers to earn and spend rewards in digital currencies instead of traditional points. Brave is a new browser that pays users in crypto currencies in exchange for their data. Lolli is a shopping portal that offers 30% cashback for using it while shopping in crypto. Roll over Boomers and tell Gen Z the news.

This report is from C-Suite, strategy's weekly newsletter that provides insights and strategies to brand and marketing leaders.



Left: Egg Farmers of Canada's "It's Not Weird" campaign made eating eggs at each meal more normal than moving a couch with someone sitting on the other end; Egg Farmers show creative ways to cook eggs; Avocados From Mexico paired the fruit with non-traditional ingredients like macaroni; the "Anytime is Avotime" spot topped toast and muffins with avocados.



It's one of the latest examples of how some CPG companies are encouraging consumers to look at their long-established brands with fresh eyes. Whether it's expanding into new usage occasions or creating counterintuitive pairings with non-traditional ingredients, food and beverage brands are shaking things up.

There are many more examples, including "It's Not Weird" by Egg Farmers of Canada, which encourages consumers to use eggs in meals beyond just breakfast. There's also Avocados from Mexico's "Anytime is Avotime" campaign that paired the fruit with ingredients like pasta and brownies to showcase its versatility. And then there's Ontario Beef, which complemented meat with things like syrup to show that it's not just steaks and tacos.

More recently, global dairy company Lactalis launched Cheeseworld.ca with recipes for food pairings from chefs, artisans and expert cheese makers. Vince Vetere, SVP and Canada GM, cheese and table spreads at Lactalis says the decision to create a "lifestyle site for cheese lovers" was made after seeing online sales double during the pandemic. He adds that it also provided the opportunity to educate Canadians on the diversity and nuances of cheese, in the hopes that they'll purchase beyond their comfort zone.

"Canada is mostly a 'cheddar and mozzarella' market. So we need to educate," he says. "Every product on the Cheeseworld site is accompanied by a 'flavour wheel' that offers visitors the ability to select cheeses based on type of milk, texture, aroma, flavour profile, usage occasion and where the product originates. People are looking to elevate their daily meals... and cheese is a way to do that."

Jason Dubroy, SVP commerce and experience at Mosaic North America says he helped Kraft Heinz explore food pairings as a marketing strategy, way back in 2014. At the time, Dubroy says that market leader

ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION

BY WILL NOVOSEDLIK

CPG BRANDS ARE EXPANDING CONSUMPTION HORIZONS BY SHOWING OFF THE VERSATILITY OF THEIR PRODUCTS.

Up for a Mushroom Truffle Daiquiri? How about a Pork Ramen Mezcal Margarita? Or a Pho Mango Bourbon Sour?

If these sound to you like the creations of some ultra-hip mixologist, you would be partly right, except you won't find them at any ultra-hip cocktail lounge. The drinks are part of a collaboration between a team of mixologists at Campbell's, as well as agencies Leo Burnett and Proof, and are available as recipes on a microsite called Campbell's Brothtails.

Kraft wasn't "getting much household love by millennial moms. Many were new to cooking, and they tended to gravitate to meals that were simple, innovative and original... and looked good on a social post." That's when the idea to create "Kraft Food Hacks" was hatched. "We created a campaign that wouldn't reposition Kraft brands, but repurpose them."

"There was a recipe for Crispy Spicy Peanut Chicken, where you brushed chicken breasts with Miracle Whip, Kraft Peanut Butter and Sriracha, and then rolled them in crushed ramen noodles," adds Dubroy. "It was extended to a crowd-sourced recipe contest... and brand new consumers were brought into categories that they never would have explored. Sales skyrocketed and they repeated the campaign through various iterations."

More brands appear to be experimenting with food/beverage pairings and expanding into new occasions these days. But why would a consumer be interested in muffins with avocado icing, syrupy steak or a broth-based cocktail?

David Kincaid, founder of Level5 Strategy, says it's because consumers have a renewed desire for change, thanks to the pandemic. "I'm stuck at home. I can't go out. I can't be with friends. The result is a boom in food exploration... Sustenance is now a form of entertainment and an opportunity to be creative."

"Change and new ideas used to be scary for most people," adds Kincaid. "But now, with the world changing all around us, it's just becoming the way we do things. And let's not forget that the most powerful word in marketing is 'new.' So new usage occasions and unusual ingredient pairings trigger the key emotions that drive trial and interest behaviours."

That doesn't mean brands should change for the sake of change. CPG marketing vet and CBO at Brand Igniter Peter Rodriguez says giving products new uses by combining them with non-traditional ingredients has to be done in consideration of the brand and where customers will give it permission to go.

"You need to listen to the heavy brand users because they already have those insights as to how to use [a product] at



Above: Cocktails made with Campbell's signature broths were whipped up by the brand to encourage consumers to experiment with its products.

Right: Ontario Beef partnered with local food producers – like Carrick Bros. syrup – to show that meat can be enjoyed in new ways.



different times, in different moments, in different locations, for different reasons," says Rodriguez. "And then you look at light users... They have the same needs, but they do not yet connect the brand to those needs. So you need to take your cues from heavy users first."

He gives the example of Hall's, a brand he managed 20 years ago. At the time, he was looking to expand usage from "season to reason" (i.e. beyond purchasing its lozenges during the cold and flu season), Rodriguez and his team noticed that heavy users didn't only use it as a cough suppressant, but also as a way to clear their throats at any time of the year. He used that insight to encourage light users to do the same, which he says grew the brand's market share by 70%.

Another example is Arm & Hammer. Researchers noticed the different ways heavy consumers were using its baking soda, which led to successful extensions

into things like toothpaste, odor absorber, laundry detergent, carpet cleaner and litter box freshener.

If it's done right, says Rodriguez, it can be a revenue driver for the brand and there "is a big benefit for the brand from a financial perspective: cost-efficiency... You can have a huge impact on margins by making minor adaptations instead of investing in the fixed assets required to create a new product."

Many companies realize that identifying the different ways their products can be used can also help grow the brand itself, says Dubroy. And with social media use now so firmly entrenched, the constant need to feed content streams is another driver, he adds. "The more versatile the product, the more content you can create. As collab culture has gone mainstream, it's not just a novelty play to have a versatility strategy built into a brand. For many, it's now just expected." 🐾

Can optimism help airlines lure travelers back?

WestJet and Air Canada's marketing strategies have steered

KENRICK MILLS/UNSPLASH

BY JUSTIN CRANN

clear of pandemic woes, instead creating a sense of confidence amid on-and-off-again restrictions.

THE MONTHS LEADING INTO THE 2021 HOLIDAY season were a period of optimism for companies in the travel and tourism sectors as restrictions against travel seemed to be lifting. Then came Omicron. Can marketers keep a positive spirit as the resurgence of COVID-19 brings yet another sudden stop to an industry that has become accustomed, over the past two years, to a constant state of ebb and flow?

“We always expected this was going to happen. Nobody thought we were out of the woods, though everybody really wanted to believe we were,” Brent Rivard, CMO at Internova Travel Group – which represents more than 62,000 travel advisors with a presence in 80 countries – told *strategy*. “Domestic travel is one thing, but with international travel, we’re going to continue to see this stop and start.”

The last two years have been particularly harsh on airlines, which saw a massive decrease in traffic amid sporadic shutdowns of international travel and strict restrictions on all flights, including domestic.

At one point, according to Andrew Shibata, VP of brand at Air Canada, traffic was down 90% for airlines. Meanwhile, WestJet, which was accustomed to flying upwards of 600,000 passengers per day, had declined to 40,000 guests in the entire month of May 2021, says Richard Bartrem, the airline’s VP of communications, brand and community investment.

“It’s hard to imagine an industry that was more heavily impacted,” he adds.

Last summer saw a shift in the right direction, as case numbers declined and vaccination rates climbed, allowing for the lifting of restrictions on domestic flying. Some Canadians saw the opportunity to gather with families they hadn’t seen in a year. The airlines sought to capitalize on that urge with targeted messaging.

“During the pandemic, many people were not able to see their families and loved ones, so reconnecting with the important people in their lives was a top priority,” notes Shibata.

To connect loved ones again, Air Canada leaned on its sponsorship of the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games with the launch of “Rise Higher,” an FCB campaign that tapped into the “youthful enthusiasm” people were feeling when it seemed like the pandemic was finally waning. The spot depicted people pursuing sport, travel, romance and familial connection – all things they had put off over the past year-and-a-half.

From WestJet and Rethink came an emotional spot called “Victoria.” The June 2021 spot told the story of a grandparent traveling from Victoria to Toronto by air to meet his granddaughter for the first time. The campaign was intended to push WestJet back into public consciousness by showing how it could facilitate connections between families who had been separated.

The optimistic messaging – in combination with a decline in COVID numbers – brought renewed interest in air travel, and the industry began a modest rebound.

“In August [2021], we were flying one million people,” says Bartrem – a significant increase from the 40,000 just a few months earlier. Loosening restrictions helped, but so too did the renewed marketing push.

In October, WestJet looked to build on that momentum and keep the prospect of international travel on the minds of Canadians who were eager to leave the country for the first time since the pandemic began. It did so



Above: Air Canada’s Olympic spot “Rise Higher” aimed to build confidence in Canadians, encouraging them to move forward and seize the moment.
Right: WestJet’s heist-themed spot made light of consumers’ desire to escape the country again.



with “Escape,” a heist-themed spot created by Rethink and featuring mask-clad people rushing to the airport in order to get away.

That spot again alluded to the fact it had “been awhile” since people were able to freely travel, while also nodding to the helpful service of WestJet employees.

“We’ve seen the demand from people wanting to go on a vacation or to see their family,” explains Bartrem. “Stacked against that demand is all of the testing and other requirements that have been put in place.”

Air Canada and WestJet promoted messaging around how to be ready for travel, and both airlines coupled those measures with other efforts – such as more flexible rebooking policies and lower airfares – to entice guests.

A focus on safety that highlighted strict vaccination and testing protocols for passengers and staff, as well as heightened hygiene efforts and the HEPA filtration systems already present on aircraft, also sought to allay concerns of would-be passengers.

The goal was to build confidence and optimism about travel heading into the holiday season – sentiment that both WestJet and Air Canada then tried to seize upon with more marketing about the importance of family and connection at that time of year.

For Air Canada, that meant getting back to its storytelling format with “’Tis the season to believe,” a spot by FCB that told the story of a man and woman – both characters inside neighbouring snow globes – who fall for one another, but are unable to connect, until being brought together by the magic of the holidays and (presumably) an Air Canada flight.

“It was inspired by the universally shared experiences and emotions felt over the course of the pandemic,” Shibata told *strategy* at the time. “Slowly but surely, family and friends have been able to safely reunite and share beautiful moments again, and we feel fortunate to play a small part in their journeys back to one another.”

WestJet’s holiday campaign was a little more direct. Keeping in line with its annual “Christmas Miracles” platform, the airline and Studio M delivered a doc-style spot featuring Canadians in Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver who were asked what they wanted most for Christmas. When they answered that they’d like to see family, a representative for the airline gifted them tickets to do just that.

In both cases, the campaigns were infused with optimism – which is “critical” to successful recovery messaging, according to Jay Chaney, CSO at Broken Heart Love Affair.

“Playing to your brand and your confidence while not worrying so much about what COVID is doing is the most critical thing that brands can do,” he explains. “Mentally, people are done with COVID. We went through that phase of fear, and now we’re in this place where people have had a taste of regained freedom and I don’t think they’re willing to let go of it.”

While the Omicron variant has led to tightening restrictions and rattled consumer confidence in travel,

it’s important for marketers not to lean too far into the pandemic experience, because they could risk connecting their brand to the negativity and struggles of the pandemic in the minds of consumers, Chaney says.

“What you’re doing is amplifying that and attaching your brand to that fear-based rollercoaster that is happening around it,” he elaborates. “You’re associating your brand with a negative emotional response. That’s not where you want to be.”

Chaney says marketers should try to win consumers who are eager

to travel, rather than convincing those who remain hesitant.

“There is going to be a contingent of consumers who are afraid to leave their house. You’re not going to convince them to do so, and I don’t think it’s ethical to try,” he says. “On the other hand, there are a lot of people who are eager. I don’t think it’s as big a challenge as it was at the beginning of COVID.”

While Omicron has undoubtedly put a dent in recovery efforts, Rivard believes “the industry is going to come back bigger and better than ever. It’s just a matter of not knowing what’s going to happen every week. Is this the week we exceed sales, or the week when we get another variant scare and everybody’s cancelling?”

Bartrem believes there’s still interest and curiosity when it comes to travel. “People want to go places and we’re seeing demand pick back up. While there are new challenges, you just have to visit an airport to realize how busy it is relative to where we were in 2020.”



Above: Air Canada and WestJet didn’t let what the pandemic was doing stop them from creating holiday spots that leaned into the positive emotions that come with connecting with loved ones.



strategy MARKETING C-SUITE

**Get corner office
perspective in your inbox.**

Sign up for your free weekly briefing

on how Canada's brand leaders are responding to
market challenges and acting on new opportunities.

strategyonline.ca/subscribe

*Fun Eva fact: She hates
raccoons. Never present
a script with raccoons.*



*Congratulations Eva Salem on being named Marketer of the Year.
We love working with you.*

Leo Burnett

MOY

MARKETERS OF THE YEAR



THE 2021 MARKETERS OF THE YEAR are all change agents.

They're instigators, implementers, and transformers. They've set in motion plans for category and market domination. Nothing's stopping them, and nothing's going to get in their way. Not even a once-in-a-century pandemic. // It's taken three years for Sandra Sanderson to fully realize the fruit of her labour at Empire. Since taking the marketing reins for the retail conglomerate's grocery banners in 2018, a suite of brand revitalizations have come to fruition, as has a more complete sports strategy and CSR platform. // At Arterra, Andrea Hunt has thrown the company's marketing playbook out the window and

come armed with consumer insights that are breathing fresh life into her category. Never has wine been so ridiculously playful, more welcoming or accessible for all. // Canadian Tire's Eva Salem was headhunted by her own employer to inject the same strategic thinking into its Sport Chek and Mark's banners, which she's mastered over her 30 year career. // Catherine Roche arrived at BMO five years ago to lead strategy. But she was destined to take on much more. Eventually adding marketing duties to her remit, she was tasked with being the architect of the bank's new purpose-driven platform. // And finally, when the SAAQ's Patrice Letendre arrived in the marketing department 15 years ago, he made it his team's mission to play the long game. He's led hundreds of cutting-edge campaigns that have, year after year, seen important changes to consumer behaviour when it comes to road safety. // Turn the page to read more about this year's leaders.



EVA SALEM BROADENS MARK'S AND SPORT CHEK'S HORIZONS

The marketer is taking lessons learned from Canadian Tire and opening more doors for its sister banners.

BY JENNIFER HORN



Up until her arrival at Canadian Tire Corporation (CTC) in 2014, Eva Salem spent a good chunk of her career at luxury cosmetics brands L’Oreal and Estee Lauder in NY. Following that, she started from scratch, grew, and later sold Belly Maternity, a high-end, multi-million-dollar business to a pair of venture capitalists.

The 30-year vet was to go from fashion and prestige to hardware and housewares, so, admittedly, before joining she thought CTC was rather conventional. “I couldn’t have been more wrong.”

The corporation proved its dynamism to the SVP, marketing and brand by taking risks and investing as much into brand as it does business. “We call it, ‘why you shop us and why you love us,’” says Salem of the mantra that has enabled Canadian Tire’s marcom to go from strength to strength.

Canadian Tire had invested in the mix of art and science for years before Salem began her tenure with the company, so philosophies were aligned and the relationship between business and brand leadership flourished. She spent six years developing prolific platforms

alongside Taxi, including “Tested for Life in Canada” and “We Do New,” before the company called on Salem to duplicate that success for Sport Chek and Mark’s in 2019.

That year, Salem also took on brand marketing duties for Pro Hockey Life and Party City, on top of Canadian Tire Retail and CTC’s owned brands – including Premier, Motor Master and Mastercraft, of which is a \$4 billion business all on its own. Her role grew to handle everything but performance marketing across every banner that operates alongside Canada’s best-known retailer.

Every few years, says Salem, Canadian Tire leans into a unique brand promise, of which ladders back to its core business promise: to sell all things to all people at all price points. And so when the marketer was asked to bring some of the storytelling magic she had perfected at Canadian Tire to the other banners, she avoided using a template. “The goal,” she says, “was to figure out what each brand needed and to use best practices and lessons from a big successful banner like CT.”

Salem admits that, over the years, the Mark’s and Sport Chek banners had fallen back on functional tactics. There was an over-reliance on price discounting and offers, and not enough of that balance between brand and business building. High-level strategy discussions with the leadership teams at those brands led to new commitments to reinvest in more compelling marketing, she says. And in 2020 and 2021, the apparel and sports brands each found their new voice, while still identifying with CTC’s broader mission to be all things for all Canadians.

Mark’s “All Things Simple” was born out of the realization that the retailer had far more to offer than people were giving it credit for, says Salem. “Mark’s has an impressive brand assortment of labels. But we weren’t really getting acknowledgment of [its role] in the casual market.” So a new platform was designed to expand consumers’ perception of Mark’s offerings, pulling the curtain back by showing the casual basics that it carries.

Created by Montreal’s Cartier, “All Things Simple” connected with consumers by showing how simple-yet-stylish clothing makes it easier to enjoy moments that matter the most; it promoted

the retailer’s “fairly frictionless” ecommerce site, where “we make shopping head to toe simple and showcase the versatility of its clothing, which may not represent fashion trends, but can be worn day in and day out.”

Salem says the “simple” platform became an internal rallying cry for how the team merchandised the store to make it easy to shop. “Mark’s really took the core of ‘All Things Simple’ and ran with it. It began to inform how the business ran itself,” she adds.

Below: Having performed marketing magic at Canadian Tire, Eva Salem was tasked to replicate success for other CTC banners like Mark’s, which she is doing through its “All Things Simple” platform.



Just as Mark’s broadened its appeal by speaking to a wider assortment of consumers, so did Sport Chek when Salem worked with the brand to make a much-needed pivot. For as long as she can remember, Sport Chek had

painted its marketing with the brush of an “ultra athlete.” While it carries a product assortment for every level of athlete, its messaging really only applied to the more competitive persona.

Again, perceptions needed to change. So the brand’s in-house creative team came up with “Find What Moves You” in 2019, with the “Cheklist” campaign in 2021 taking its efforts to reach all levels of athletes even further. Creative shows “everyday athletes” tackling a larger goal – like running outside at 5:30am every day – by dividing it up into digestible units – like switching off the alarm, or tying their laces before hitting the pavement.

Both platforms re-grounded the brands to be inclusive of more casual consumers. But they also tapped into new behaviours brought on by COVID. Sport Chek’s

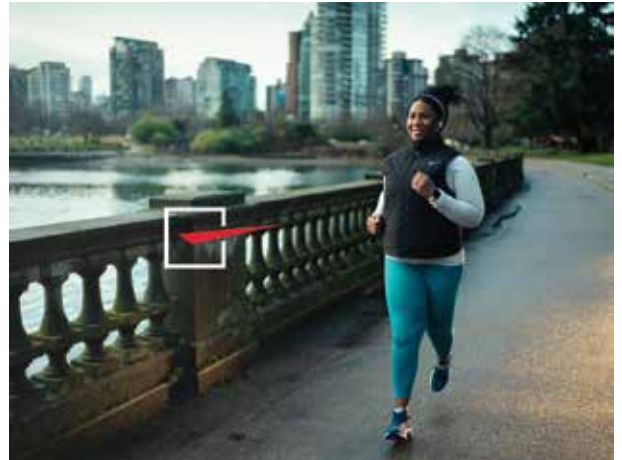
campaigns came at a time when more Canadians showed an interest in physical activity, says Salem, while Mark’s product assortment was curated for ease-of-purchase, reflecting shoppers’ “get in, get out” mindset.

It hasn't been a one-way street between Canadian Tire and the other retail banners. Salem says she has equally taken lessons from Mark's and Sport Chek. The brands borrow from one another, all the while keeping specific guardrails around what they stand for.

"For instance, at Canadian Tire, we're constantly reinventing how we merchandise products so that they are intuitively easy for our consumers to shop – and the inspiration came from Sport Chek and Mark's," says Salem. She explains that the banners figured out how to reconfigure their stores from the ground up to better suit different types of shoppers. "Whereas, at CT, we were just making tweaks and we weren't really looking at it in a holistic way. [Working with those brands] expanded our minds."

Even during the pandemic, results across banners have been flattering – comparable sales were up 7.9% and 12.9% for 2020 and 2021 in Q4 for Mark's, 11.2% and 7% for Sport Chek, and 1.4% and 25.3% for Canadian Tire – but Salem says there's still more work to be done.

Her marketing department, of which she counts 80 heads and a new agency partner in Publicis, continues to be tasked with driving the company's higher-level



Right: The marketer carved out a new strategy for Sport Chek, which was executed via "Cheklist," a campaign that speaks to athletes of all levels.

shared value: "To make life in this fantastic country better. Whether that's through products that help you play, deal with the weather, keep you dry, or that keep you safe – that's core to our belief system."

Making life better for people is how you continue to have a meaningful role in their lives, she says.

"Because if you're doing that, you win on everything else automatically."



■ Eva's

It's clear whose moment this is.
Félicitations from all of us at Cartier.

■ Mark's × CARTIER



HERE'S TO THINKING OUTSIDE THE TOOLBOX.

CONGRATULATIONS
EVA SALEM ON BEING
NAMED STRATEGY
MARKETER OF THE YEAR.



ANDREA HUNT MAKES WINE MORE APPROACHABLE

How the marketer is applying a consumer-centric lens to a category that has, for too long, been deemed intimidating.

BY JENNIFER HORN

Sweet or tart? Notes of citrus, black cherry or chocolate? Light or full body? Vintage or non-vintage? Foreign or domestic? What appellation? High or low alcohol? The list of questions that confront consumers when purchasing a wine goes on.

Wine can be intimidating and unapproachable to someone who's never learned the basics of picking a good varietal, says Andrea Hunt, who also believes the category has stayed within

its lane for far too long. There are more occasions to drink rosé than summers on the patio, to enjoy sparkling wine than birthdays, or red wine with a formal sit-down meal.

"For a category that's at the forefront of people's beverage choices, it's increasingly getting crowded out by a spirit option, a cocktail, refreshment, non-alcoholic," adds Hunt. The spirits category spends five times as much as wine, she says, and beer is almost double, if not triple. "So I think a big part of keeping wine relevant for new lifestyles is to make it more convenient, portable, lighter, fun. These are spaces that wine typically hasn't been in before."

The leadership at Arterra Wines, where Hunt is SVP and CMO, saw the writing on the wall when they enlisted her to reinvent the company's portfolio in 2019. Arterra had been under new management for two years before Hunt arrived. One year after its purchase by the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan from Constellation Brands in 2016, Arterra Wines was born and so were a new set of ambitions. "Once [Arterra] was on its own footing, the agenda was reoriented and it began to control its own destiny much more materially."

Hunt's mandate was two-fold. First, solidify a consumer-centric strategic direction for its campaigns; and second, pursue more aggressive innovation targets. The task was not foreign to the marketer. Her time at Weston Bakeries just prior to arriving at Arterra was spent following a similar directive – reverse the perception that bread had become a stale business using breakthrough creative. Completing that mission led Hunt to be named a *strategy* Marketer of the Year in 2018.

She is using similar principles at her current employer as she did at Weston. Both companies have to navigate resource constraints, Hunt says. She's navigating the challenge through a combination of science and art, using data analytics and insights capabilities that were recently brought in-house. Now, her team is starting to better pinpoint where consumers are headed.

Take wellness, for example. Almost every CPG brand is pursuing a better-for-you product strategy as more consumers



Above, clockwise: Andrea Hunt brought a playful side to sparkling wine with the launch of Pink Poodle; tapping into the wellness space, On Point was created in collaboration with WW; Pink Poodle's simple graphics are meant to rid bubbly wines of the notion of exclusivity; Saintly takes a less-is-more approach to make its wine more approachable.

reach for healthier food and drink options. Recognizing that wine has seen little development in the space, Hunt and her team created a healthier alcoholic beverage people can enjoy while still respecting their wellness goals. They called it Bask, a play on how wine drinkers can take pleasure in drinking a wine that boasts zero grams of sugar.

Nutritional information was added to the bottle (a rare move for the category), with the team looking outside of wine for design inspiration. Jackknife landed on a label that doesn't feel too clinical, she says, and that's reminiscent of a lifestyle brand with its transparent packaging. The lighter family of wines launched in 2020 and has since spawned thousands of competitors, adds Hunt. "It established a beachhead for wellness in wine."

Almost a year later, in June 2021, Hunt's team worked with global weight loss and wellness brand WW to create On Point, another health-conscious wine that has only 90 calories, one gram of sugar, and two grams of carbohydrates.

Hunt applies a "how can we make this a lifestyle brand?" approach to other products in her portfolio. Saintly, for example, is a domestic wine that wasn't seen as a contemporary option in the sparkling wine and rose categories. Today its greatest hindrance is scarcity in that it consistently sells out in stores, says the marketer. Again, Jackknife designed an aesthetic that was much more simplistic and approachable. "It doesn't play to the wine's origins and there's a lot less information that you have to navigate," says Hunt.

"Sometimes less is more. It makes it more approachable."

Pink Poodle is another Arterra brand that's democratizing sparkling wine by giving it mass appeal. The budget-friendly option comes with packaging that's more playful than one would expect from a bubbly. It too was designed using basic graphics that don't convey exclusivity and broaden use occasion beyond once or twice a year, says Hunt.

"What are consumers looking for? What are their pain points? Is what we're doing by design or by accident?" says Hunt of the questions she routinely asks her team. "There are a lot of things that we just do habitually, and that doesn't necessarily marry with what consumers are looking for. Other alcoholic categories have been pushing beyond, but wine has not been as ready. But that's changing."

Making wine approachable also means making it accessible.

Hunt says that when exploring the evolution of Jackson-Trigg's messaging from "we're a wine for that" to "we're a wine for you," she questioned whether that was really true. Is the brand, and even the category as a whole, inclusive to persons of colour, the LGBTQ+ community or people of varying physical abilities in its messaging?

"Are we really a wine for you? Were we really honoring what that means? In stepping back, we did some work and adopted a platform called 'Wine Can Change'" says Hunt.

To bring its new commitment to drive better representation in wine culture – which had become homogenous – to life, Jackson-Triggs worked with Bensimon Byrne to create "GIPHY." The team recreated 200 of the most popular wine gifts using a diverse

group of talent from a variety of underrepresented communities, including gender, sexuality, disability, and religion. They then paid to have the social content land at the top of online searches.

“It caught fire like nobody’s business,” says Hunt. “Every week there’s another 10 million impressions and millions of shares. And this was basically a free initiative with the goal to show what the wine world should like. If Jackson-Triggs – which sells more bottles of wine than there are Canadians – is a leader in the category, then we should be championing that.”

Wine is a viticulture, hospitality and an export business, says Hunt. It’s also luxury and traditional branding, as well as product development. Because there are so many facets to the business, in

Above: To drive better representation in wine culture, Jackson-Triggs brought diversity to social content.



early 2020, Hunt brought in a more diverse set of thinkers and doers to the team to build on its knowledge and offer more challenging views.

A major restructuring was implemented right before COVID

hit, moving 75 people (or a third of the department) into new roles and investing heavily into building a new insights group. Now it’s on the road to building up its digital capabilities. The pandemic accelerated Arterra’s plans to improve its ecommerce offerings, she says, particularly through the Wine Rack network, of which the company owns.

“There’s been some very basic steps that have been expensive, but transformational,” Hunt adds. “It’s a journey but we do believe that the category is going to mature. If you can order anything else online, you should be able to do the same for your wine. There are machinations that make it difficult, but a frictionless consumer journey is the next frontier.”



CHEERS TO A VERY FINE YEAR.

Congrats on Marketer of the Year from your fans at Broken Heart Love Affair.



MMXIII
JACKNIFE
-CDN-

*Jacknife would like to raise a glass and toast **Andrea Hunt**, one of Strategy's Marketer of the Year Award winners. It has been a true honour collaborating and creating with you and your stellar team. Here's to another round and of course, to uncorking more creative brilliance together!*

Cheers, Jacknife



SANDRA SANDERSON FLIPS THE SCRIPT AT SOBEYS

How the marketing vet led sweeping changes across grocery banners and marketing teams coast to coast. BY JENNIFER HORN

Just one week into her role at Empire, having joined the grocery conglomerate in late 2018, Sandra Sanderson was able to find her purpose. It took the next three years to see it come to fruition.

Michael Medline – who at the time had been Empire’s sitting president and CEO for about a year – asked if Sanderson would leave sunny Florida and her employer White House Black Market to join his leadership team in wintry Ontario.

She accepted his offer without hesitation. For the first time in the company’s history, under Medline’s

rule, marketing was being given precedence. He wanted to completely change the way its banners connect and communicate with consumers. Sanderson couldn’t pass up the once-in-a-career opportunity to be a part of its historical transformation.

The CEO’s Project Sunrise, a three-year plan to restructure and revive the company after several lackluster financial earnings, was already underway when Sanderson arrived. Her first seven days on the job were spent touring the company’s banners coast to coast. “Every single one looked the same,” she remembers of that first week visiting its

national chain Sobeys, IGA in Quebec, Safeway and Thrifty Foods in B.C., Foodland in Atlantic Canada, among many other banners.

“We had to do some foundational work,” says the SVP of marketing. “Empire is a family of brands. There’s common DNA, but each member of the family has a unique identity and different personality. We worked together with the merchandising team to ID the points of differentiation – the brand pillars. It’s been three years in the making, but we have now finally completed the grocery banners.”

Working with FCB on Sobeys and Safeway, BBDO



Above (middle and right): The company's biggest-ever integrated marketing push around its Olympic sponsorship led Sobeys to gain significant ground, as the grocery banner tracked similar awareness levels as some of the more seasoned sponsors.

on Thrifty Foods, and Juliet on Foodland and FreshCo, Sanderson's team refreshed the banners with distinctive visual identities that paint towns green and red – the brands' bold signature hues. Sanderson believes that stores are the "fullest expression of a retail brand," which is why she had her marketing team work closely with design and construction to articulate and have the brand strategy be reflected from the store floor up.

But before she could institute changes to the brands, Sanderson had plans for another overhaul.

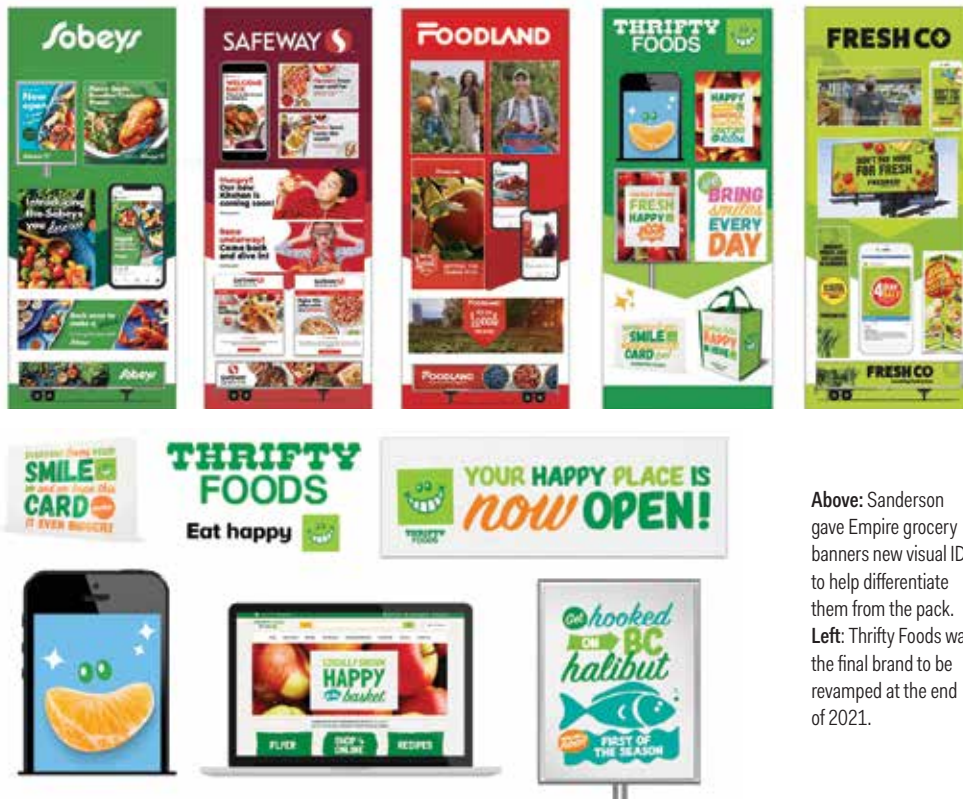
The marketing department was bogged down with siloes and fixated on "reactive, tactical executions" that weren't really connected to brand strategy. So she shifted 100% of the marketing team into new roles under a new structure. Gone were its generalized field marketing teams. In their place stood new brand and planning groups, each with a dedicated marketing director who became the champion for their respective banner. Sanderson simply applied the same brand management structures she had learned during her career at marketing behemoths like P&G, Kraft and Coke.

"Having a lead for each brand helps to drive the strategy and drive differentiation," she says. "In the past, there would have been ad hoc fulfillment of

communications requests. Now there's someone sitting at the leadership table, discussing business needs with all of the other functional needs. It's fundamentally a different approach."

A big part of Medline's vision was to transform Empire from a regional and fragmented company to a national enterprise. To help achieve that goal, Sanderson recognized that sponsorship could play a role. Over the years the company saw sports as a way to create a deeper connection to consumers, while also bringing its banners together under a common theme. Though it had assembled an impressive sports portfolio that included the NHL, CFL, Raptors, Maple Leafs, Blue Jays and Tennis Canada, the company elevated its sports strategy to a whole new level when it became the first-ever official grocer for the Olympic Team Canada, says Sanderson.

"Sobeys is truly our national banner," she says, "which is why, when we sponsored the Olympics, it was our lead banner. [But] it integrated almost every grocery banner we have. We orchestrated a simultaneous launch of the campaign in every office across Nova Scotia, Montreal, Mississauga, Calgary, Victoria. The level of engagement that we got from our office and frontline teammates was outstanding. It brought us, and Canadians, together."



Above: Sanderson gave Empire grocery banners new visual IDs to help differentiate them from the pack. Left: Thrifty Foods was the final brand to be revamped at the end of 2021.

During its first year at the Games, Sanderson says Sobeys' Olympic "Feed the Dream" campaign and sponsorship – led in large part by Erika DeHaas, VP of marketing communications – helped it achieve similar awareness levels as some of the more long-standing sponsors. In total, the creative generated more than 925 million impressions. And for this year's Beijing Winter Olympics, Sanderson says Empire entered into a partnership with the Canadian Paralympic Committee to reinforce a more inclusive commitment to the country's athletes.

The Olympic campaign was the company's largest ever and it was followed soon after by the company's biggest CSR push. Just as her team was rolling out its most comprehensive sports sponsorship, Sanderson was leading a landmark partnership with 13 hospital foundations across 10 provinces. Working with the Sobeys Foundation and the Canadian Children's Hospital Foundation, Sobeys created the "Family of Support" initiative, which raised \$5 million for mental health programs at healthcare facilities – double the amount it initially set out to achieve.

"Sobeys' purpose is to be a 'family nurturing families.' It's been part of our DNA for 115 years... So that was absolutely the inspiration for the child and youth mental health focus," she adds. "It was also the

first time that the Sobeys family and the business partnered on a national philanthropic initiative."

Beyond brand explorations, sports and social impact campaigns, Sanderson says there were two other areas of focus for the company that materialized in 2021: sustainability and marketing tech.

First announced in early 2020, Sobeys was the first national grocer to ban plastic bags from its stores. It eventually removed 800 million single-use grocery bags from circulation annually, says Sanderson, and 85% of customers now bring their own reusable bags or no bags at all. Later, in the spring of 2021, Empire joined forces with Second Harvest to create a Food Rescue app, which its grocery banners' distribution centers and e-commerce businesses use to track and divert food waste,

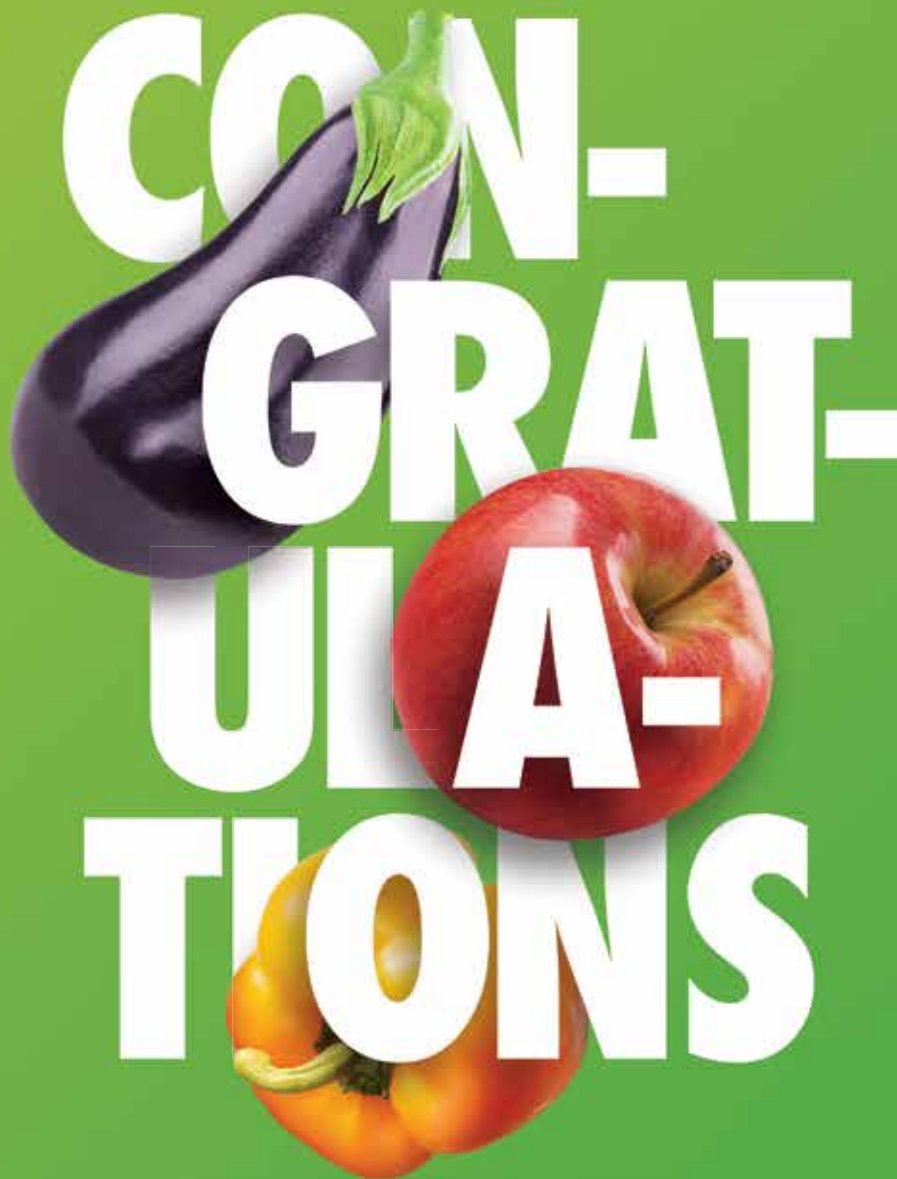
essentially saving 31 million pounds of food for families in need.

"Consumers expect more from brands than just products and services," says Sanderson. "[Companies] doing [their] part for the environment was something that was growing in importance, so we needed to elevate our leadership in that area."

The final pillar – marketing technology, analytics and data – is still a relatively new area for Empire, but it began making significant investments three years ago, she says. "We're now well on our journey to personalization." Empire is taking "an enterprise view" when it comes to data, she says, and tying all of its banners together through customized messaging.

It's safe to say that the core foundations of the company were shaken, from top to bottom, when Medline arrived at Empire. Sanderson followed his lead and wasn't afraid to rip the band-aid at once, as she puts it, when the marketing department was flipped on its head and decisions to shift resources and rethink every one of its brands was made.

Coming in, she wasn't sure of the team's readiness, "but what I found was, they were overwhelmingly waiting for the change. Change management wasn't needed at the executive table because they wanted marketing to be a strategic partner by their side."



Sandra Sanderson

on being selected as one of Strategy's
2021 Marketers of the Year!

Sincerely, all your friends at...

North

BBDO

FCB

xmc





CATHERINE ROCHE SHOWS THE GOOD IN BMO

The CMO was one of the key architects behind a purpose platform that helped frame up everything the bank stands for.

BY JENNIFER HORN

Catherine Roche isn't your average marketer. In fact, she actually wasn't a marketer until about five years ago. That was when she left one of the Big Three consulting firms, BCG, for one of the Big Five banks, BMO. There, she quickly climbed the ranks and was appointed CMO in 2021. But spending 20 years as a consultant, never the client, isn't what puts Roche in a league of her own – it's that she had a significant hand in crafting, articulating, and enacting BMO's *raison d'être*.

"To Boldly Grow the Good in Business and in Life" is what she and her colleague Richard Rudderham – the chief HR officer at the time – called the bank's new purpose platform when it debuted in late 2019. It's not that BMO wasn't "growing the good" before Roche and Rudderham formally set the strategy to drive positive change. Giving back had always been a core part of the bank's brand, but the architects of its manifesto



uncovered a way to better communicate that to the public.

“We wanted to have a conversation with our community about what we stand for in a way that not only spoke about our charitable good deeds, but also connected to our work as bankers,” says Roche of the reason they spent 10 months in 2018 speaking with 18,000 employees and thousands more customers on how they perceive the bank. They also consulted with professors of anthropology, biology, environmental science and theology to unearth BMO’s strengths.

When they were done, a manifestation of the bank’s purpose was released with a set of commitments to “support a thriving economy, sustainable future and inclusive society.” That entails things like doubling the size of its Indigenous banking business, increasing its support for small businesses and, especially, women entrepreneurs, as well as mobilizing billions of dollars for sustainable finance by 2025.

A massive component of the bank’s new mission is to create “Zero Barriers to Inclusion” and there are several programs that Roche and the marketing team of

Above: In a 2021 Earth Day campaign, BMO connected the dots for consumers by showing them how they can contribute to sustainable finance.

350 have developed to support equity, equality and inclusion.

Much of the bank’s focus is targeted at fighting gender bias by addressing the root causes of women’s financial disempowerment. This can be seen in “Jane’s Story,” a 2020 short film – created by FCB, with media by UM – that shows a young girl as she experiences a lifetime of negative stereotypes that condition her to become financially dependent on someone else. The bank then set out to #bankruptthebias and encouraged society to dismantle the myths that women don’t know how to handle



their finances. In 2021, Roche and the team released another campaign as an evolution of “Jane’s Story” and which centered around a petition to eliminate terms like “gold digger” and “shopaholic” from the dictionary.

BMO had been a strong believer in removing roadblocks that exist for women, long before Roche joined the bank. In 1994, for example, it was recognized for bringing women into leadership roles when it was the first Canadian company – and North American bank – to win a Catalyst Award. In 2017, it did it again, becoming one of only nine companies to win the medal twice. Beyond its internal efforts, the bank also breaks barriers through funding, having created the BMO Celebrating Women Grant Program in 2020 to provide financial support as pandemic-induced lockdowns wrecked havoc on small businesses.

“When women aren’t empowered, that costs the

community and we lose economic opportunity. BMO believes that’s a reality it can change,” says Roche. “We’ve been a pioneer on that journey with women for a long time, and therefore, it’s only natural for marketing to be thinking about how to bring that into conversations with customers and the community more broadly.”

The marketer says her mission is to create “an ongoing, steady drumbeat of stories” that go beyond one-time campaigns. For example, while “Barrier Breakers” was launched during Black History month in 2021, it continues to grow with the digital series being regularly updated. “Barrier Breakers” kicked off with stories of black business owners who face various obstacles, but has since evolved to include entrepreneurs of different cultural backgrounds. So far, it’s featured 12 BIPOC business owners.

That same reiterative approach has also been applied to the work BMO is doing in sustainable

Above: The bank’s “Zero Barriers to Inclusion” strategy includes an ongoing series featuring BIPOC business owners navigating obstacles on their way to success.

finance, says Roche. The brand claims to have been the “only bank to deliver a sustained climate message beyond Earth Day” when it aired “Banking for Change” – a commercial that communicated how BMO is financing sustainable businesses with \$300 billion by 2025. “It was a campaign where we communicated to a more mass audience about what we’re doing to contribute to a sustainable future,” says Roche, adding that a big opportunity for the bank going forward will be around articulating how consumers are a part of that journey.

“When people talk about sustainable finance, it can often feel so lofty, so distant,” she says. “But how can I – as a consumer and the way that I work with my bank – contribute to a better future? That’s something we’ve been very mindful of. We’re looking for ways to show, in our retail banking space, how the choice of a credit card, for instance, goes directly to initiatives like rebuilding forests. We’ve got to make that connection clearer for our customers.”

It’s not everyday that a CMO is asked to construct a company vision that rallies an entire enterprise as vast as BMO. But Roche believes that because “marketing is the front face of the bank and the connection to consumers” that it was only natural for the department to be at the centre of the conversation.

“Marketing continues to play a central role, telling stories and bringing proof points to life in a powerful way,” she adds. “Leaning on our purpose-driven dialogue is so important to us. So you’re going to see a continuation of a steady drumbeat around zero barriers to inclusion, with sustainability becoming a bigger area for us.”

When you Boldly Grow the Good,
great things happen.

.....

**Congratulations,
Catherine Roche.**

.....

From your friends at

FCB CANADA |





PATRICE LETENDRE GOES FOR CUTTING EDGE CREATIVITY

Playing the long game, the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) marketer uses shock and humour to make Quebec roads safer.

BY DANNY KUCHARSKY

In 2021, students at Quebec universities were asked to sample car crash-flavoured potato chips that combined the taste of rubber, metal, blood and airbags. It was all part of a cannabis impaired driving campaign by the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ), which is responsible for promoting road safety in the province.

The goal was to “take away the taste for driving stoned,” says Patrice Letendre, strategic advisor at the SAAQ, which is an important consideration since 21% of drivers killed in road accidents in Quebec from 2015 to 2019 had cannabis in their bloodstream.

Letendre has a track record in creating – alongside Lg2 – similar cutting-edge, internationally recognized campaigns that have helped make Quebec roads safer. Along with increased police surveillance, the PSAs spearheaded by Letendre have helped play a role in decreasing the number of accident victims on Quebec roads by 35% from 2016 to 2020, even as the number of vehicles on the road continues to increase.

Letendre notes that the last two years have had a major impact on the SAAQ. In the early days



Above: A new strategy to prevent road accidents in Quebec was implemented by Patrice Letendre in 2021, with creative from Lg2 showing the dangers of distracted – not only impaired – driving.

of the pandemic, the Quebec government asked all ministries to temporarily halt advertising to make room for pandemic awareness campaigns. Once marketing resumed, Letendre realized that COVID-19 had led to changes in driving behaviour and so he shifted the SAAQ's strategy to focus on road safety problems caused by the pandemic, including excessive speed and distraction.

"Police told us they were seeing an increase in speeding because there were fewer cars and there was stress over closed schools, working from home, parents in long-term care homes, unemployment and financial problems," he says. And with children returning to school in September 2020, more frazzled parents would be driving their kids, especially since many older school bus drivers weren't returning to work. "We thought there may be a speed problem in school zones."

Research has shown parents tend to speed as soon as they've dropped off their children, even though they're aware of the 30-kilometre maximum speed limit in school zones. To motivate parents to slow down, Lg2 – which has worked with the SAAQ since 2012 – came up with the idea of a "Living Radar."

For the campaign, children were shown as potential accident victims, with backpacks sporting digital radars showing drivers how fast they were going.

"It was a wild success," says Letendre, adding that SAAQ received requests for information from road safety authorities in Japan and several European countries about how they could use the living radar system in their markets.

"It brings prestige to Quebec to see that what we're doing is attracting attention from around the world," he says.

Another speed-related campaign, launched in June 2021, featured two singers calling upon people to "Partez plus tôt" (leave earlier) so that they wouldn't be in such a rush while driving.

"We want people to say it's not normal to go over the speed limit. We're saying to people that if you leave earlier, you'll be able to drive slower. If you take the time to watch a TV series on Netflix, and take your time to do a lot of other things, why don't you take your time on the road?"

Although Letendre has been at the SAAQ since 1991, where he began his career as a researcher, it is in the last 15 years that he has been at the helm of its



From top: “Living Radars” encouraged drivers to be cautious near schools; a musical number showed people leaving a little earlier to avoid speeding; car crash flavoured chips demonstrated the dangers of cannabis impaired driving.



advertising campaigns. He has so far led the creation of 156 ads for SAAQ.

Letendre’s educational background makes him ideal for a job that combines road safety and marketing: he wrote his thesis on road safety while completing his Masters in Geography at the Université de Sherbrooke and has an MBA in marketing from Université Laval.

He made use of that expertise in 2012, when

he wrote the Report on Automobile Advertising Guidelines, which established Canadian rules to prohibit ads that present reckless, dangerous or prohibited road safety practices. Provincial governments and representatives from the ad and auto industries participated in the report.

Aside from winning numerous advertising industry awards, Letendre has been recognized internally for campaigns focused on impaired or distracted driving that have succeeded in changing driver behaviour. In 2013, he won the Zenith Grand Prize for Excellence for Communicator of the Year, given annually to a Quebec government employee.

In his marketing role, Letendre proposes advertising strategies, evaluates media plans and advertising concepts suggested by Lg2, monitors campaign budgets and participates in all stages of production and on post-campaign evaluations. His road safety strategic communications department team numbers 10 and is part of the SAAQ’s 55-person communications and PR department.

The SAAQ’s advertising budget, unchanged since 2007 at \$5 million annually, is increasing to \$6.5 million this year as it increases its investment in digital and social media.

After almost 20 years of focusing on the dangers of texting while driving, Letendre recently shifted SAAQ’s strategy to show there are other forms of distracted driving.

“When you think about all kinds of things while driving, you’re susceptible to having an accident because you’re not concentrating,” he says.

In “Lavage concentré” (focused washing), launched in September 2021, drivers were called upon to meditate and clear their minds of jumbled thoughts while in a car wash, so that they would be free to concentrate on driving. Another TV spot featured a woman saying that while she was thinking of all kinds of things while driving, she did not see the pedestrian she hit. “Now I don’t think about anything else,” says the woman in the spot.

Letendre notes that while SAAQ campaigns have played a role in improving road safety in Quebec, the success is also shared by legislators and police. “It’s a combination of awareness, legislation and control.”

Improvements in road safety can take years to be seen and it is hard to measure the direct impact of a single SAAQ campaign, which is in sharp contrast to commercial brand marketing programs.

However, Letendre doesn’t doubt that the organization’s campaigns have a unique way of bringing people’s attention to road safety concerns.

“We know our marketing strategies are working.”

**If you drink to Pat,
don't drive.**

Congrats to SAAQ's Patrice Letendre for 2021 Marketer of the Year. Cheers, Pat!

lg2

MARRYING SALES AND SUSTAINABILITY

HOW DO MARKETERS JUGGLE BOTH GROWTH GOALS?

BY CHRIS LOMBARDO



Anti-clockwise from top left: Levi's encourages consumers to buy clothing that lasts, while IKEA nudges them to explore gently-used items; B Corp certifies brands that commit to balancing purpose with profit.

Can a company be in the black while still being green?

For profit-generating businesses that have made sustainability a cornerstone, doing better for the planet while driving sales for the company can be conflicting.

Brands in categories like fast fashion – which operate on the traditional business model of driving high frequent consumption to drive bigger profits – have a particularly difficult challenge balancing sales goals with sustainable practices. H&M, for one, has struggled to strike the right balance, with critics calling the company out for not being realistic about its business model and eco goals.

So can they truly co-exist? And how do marketers drive both missions in an authentic way without overstating what their brands are actually doing?

IKEA lives in the world of fast furniture, yet Melissa Barbosa, the retailer's sustainability manager, says the brand is able to balance business growth and positive social and eco impact as a result of long-term goals that meet the needs of consumers today and of the future.

IKEA consistently ranks among the greenest companies because of its responsible sourcing and distribution of products, services, materials and components from hundreds of suppliers spanning the globe. Barbosa says the retailer also developed a proprietary tool called "e-wheel," which is used to evaluate the environmental impact of its materials, manufacturing, distribution, and product life.

"Our sustainability message rings true because achieving a better and greener future is not only what we do, but how we do it – it's woven into our culture," Barbosa says.

Des Jones, CSO at Juniper Park\TBWA says that consumers have finite resources, and so he doesn't like to look at marketing as driving consumption. At best, he says, it can move consumers from one behaviour to another. "From that point of view, marketing should bring consumers into the company's journey toward sustainability."

IKEA, for example, follows its planet positive strategy through with consumer-facing messaging that encourages consumers to rethink changes in their lifestyle and consumption. Because small changes, says Barbosa, can lead to big actions.

Its Second Life program, for example, extends the lifespan of gently used materials by offering shoppers a secondary online marketplace where the retailer offers in-store credit when consumers give used IKEA furniture a new home.

Matthew Kelly, managing partner, Level5 Strategy points to Patagonia as having been one of the first to develop a repair and reuse program, with the tenet that it's better to buy something that will last. Levi's new brand platform "Buy Better, Wear Longer" – which aims to bring awareness to the environmental impacts of apparel production and consumption, and builds on Levi's proposition of offering durable, quality products that last longer – is another example of a brand that encourages consumers to change their purchase habits.

These brands have recognized that to be able to advance sustainability goals, they also need to

address consumer use, “which is the right place to start,” says Kelly. Patagonia has admitted that it would be hypocritical for the company to advocate for environmental change without asking consumers to think before they buy, he adds.

Over the years, experts have suggested brands that offer longer-lasting goods at higher price-points could be poised to succeed, as consumers grow increasingly interested in craftsmanship, heritage and keeping products for the long haul.

Fast fashion knows it needs to change, and that change could mean higher prices for consumers. If marketing doesn’t create an appetite for these higher prices, Jones believes consumers will simply stick with lower-priced, non-sustainable products.

predecessors – and one strategy is to get certified.

Sustainability is incredibly important, but it’s difficult for consumers to judge a brand’s eco credentials, says Jones. Regulation and certification play an important role in facilitating that judgement, which Jones says started with the automotive category in the ‘80s and ‘90s. As “safety” became an increasing public concern, brands took it upon themselves to promote their credentials. Consumers didn’t know who to trust or believe, and certification created a new standard.

Since B Corp Certification’s inception in 2006, more than 4,000 companies have received its imprimatur, adopting a legal requirement to balance purpose with profit. In 2018, Danone Canada achieved its B Corp certification (a couple of years ahead of schedule) and a slew of CPGs have since followed suit.

“It’s a business driver, as B Corp certification certainly helps perceptually,” adds Chaney, who works with health food snack brand MadeGood, which is certified and positions itself around supporting organic farmers and ingredients that are “gentle on the Earth.” Chaney says MadeGood has taken it a step further, receiving a special designation from Future Fit, a

Right and below: MadeGood’s “Unwreck the Future” acknowledges that protecting people and the planet needs to be a collective effort between citizens and brands.

Far right: Unilever’s “U Does Good” platform aims to drive both eco and social impact.



Kelly – whose background includes senior leadership roles in CPG, a category often in the crosshairs of environmentalists when it comes to sustainability practices – believes an effective way to drive profitability in a sustainable way is to do it at an enterprise level.

Unilever, for example, has made environmental, social and governance (ESG) front-and-centre of everything it does, stating that it is acting “to improve the health of the planet. Tackling climate action. Protecting and regenerating nature. And creating a waste-free world.” With its “Everyday U Does Good” mission, Kelly believes the CPG co is positioning itself as a leader and setting the tone for other brands, too.

Jason Chaney, CSO at Broken Heart Love Affair, says he’s seeing new generations of leaders looking to make a change and find better ways of doing things than their

non-profit whose aim is to protect future generations by being environmentally restorative, socially just and economically inclusive. The CPG brand’s strategy has been to reach millennial parents who are not just concerned about the food they feed their children, but also about the potential of further damaging the future life of our planet, says Chaney.

Its “Unwreck the Future” campaign speaks directly to those concerned citizens with a long-term outlook, he says, communicating that the company cannot do this alone, and that it will take a collective effort from brands and consumers alike. For instance, a MadeGood “Unwrecking Crew” was created, with youth ambassadors in the U.S. and Canada working with the brand on a regular basis to reduce food insecurity in communities.

Today, marketers face the challenge of conveying sustainability propositions to an increasingly cynical public. From a consumer’s perspective, grandiose gestures may resonate, says Chaney, however consistently doing eco-forward practices is better in the long run.

As corporations see from research that consumers want them to act on climate issues, more are beginning to respond. Besides, says Chaney, there’s the question of self-interest: the less brands help to maintain a healthy environment, the more difficult it will be for them to operate in the marketplace as more crises emerge. 🌱



55 YEARS OF McDONALD'S CANA

THE LOCAL ARM OF THE GLOBAL QSR BECAME A TOP PERFORMER THROUGH PRODUCTS AND CAMPAIGNS THAT ADDRESSED CONSUMER TASTES, PROMPTING OTHER MARKETS TO FOLLOW SUIT. BY WILL NOVOSÉDLIK

It's a coincidence that a brand as American as McDonald's should arrive on our shores at the most Canadian of moments: our centennial year, 1967.

As George Cohon, McDonald's Canada founder, put it: "We didn't know a soul, we didn't have much money and people didn't know who we were. McDonald's then was far from being the household word it is today."

Apparently, the launch was met with a lukewarm response. Perhaps we were too preoccupied with celebrating our 100th birthday, or too distracted by the excitement of Expo 67. However, in a move to establish some much-needed affinity, McDonald's founder Ray Kroc approved the addition of the maple leaf to

the Golden Arches, something that has never been done anywhere else. If that gesture was Kroc's way of recognizing that our two countries are different, the evolution of McDonald's Canada over the last 55 years would set out to prove it.

CANADA TELLS ITS OWN STORY

When taking the Canadian CMO role in 2014 (of which she held until early 2021), Antoinette Benoit acknowledged in an interview with *strategy* that there was a preconceived notion that McDonald's was a faceless, international corporate behemoth.

That's why the brand has been so laser-focused on building a local narrative, with campaigns such as "Welcome to McDonald's" in 2015 that told the stories of Canadian customers and staff.

It's also built a strong profile in Quebec through a continuous sponsorship of one of the country's most iconic brands: the Montreal Canadiens.

The success of its Canada-focused strategy is borne out by the numbers.



Clockwise from top left: Over the years, McDonald's Canada has touted transparency by highlighting how it sources ingredients and prepares its food via campaigns like "Back to the Farm," "See-Thru Kitchen" and "Our Food. Your Questions."; a "Snapchat Door" promoted its digital growth, with the launch of McDelivery; the "Not Without Canadian Farmers" campaign was an extension of the brand's local storytelling strategy that revolved around food sourcing.

DA LEADING THE WAY

Around 2.5 million guests visit 1,400 McDonald's restaurants across Canada every day. Through its local franchisees, the QSR employs 90,000 Canadians coast-to-coast and has created more than 200,000 jobs, generating almost \$4.5 billion in local annual economic activity. It injects approximately \$4.2 million into local Canadian economies every day and \$130 million in corporate income taxes annually. It's safe to say that, in Canada, McDonald's is no small potatoes.

Alyssa Buetikofer, recently appointed to replace Benoit as CMO, is committed to keeping it that way. Says Buetikofer, "As a brand, we're focused on driving a meaningful connection with consumers. To do that we need to make sure that the stories we tell and the campaigns we bring to life are relevant to Canadians. If what we do here is picked up by other markets, that's icing on the cake."

A LEADER AMONG MARKETS

The Canadian brand's 55-year history has seen a number of firsts. Since the invention of the McFlurry in

1995 by franchisee Ron McLellan in Bathurst, NB, many other Canadian ideas have been successful enough to be adopted around the world.

Just look to the early 2000s when McDonald's – the home of the world's most famous hamburger – saw its fortunes reverse after 47 years of growth. In December 2002, the global brand reported its first-ever net quarterly loss of \$343.8 million, compared with a profit of \$271 million for fiscal 2001. The loss was more than four times greater than what had been projected. Global CEO Jack Greenberg announced the bad news, and promptly retired.

The reasons for this setback were many. For one thing, pundits agreed that it had maxed out its markets. In Canada, for example, it had grown from one store in 1967 to 1,300 in 2002, and would add only 100 stores over the next twenty years, reducing its annual average retail expansion rate from 37% to 5%. Others cited changing demographics and increased competition. But the main culprit was simply that people's tastes were changing, mostly driven by health concerns.

McDonald's Canada, however, had the foresight to respond to changing consumer preferences by adding salads and wraps to its menu before any losses were counted. Trial of "Lighter Choices," which was launched in 2002, was a big success. By the time the brand introduced its memorable "I'm lovin' it" campaign in 2004, McDonald's Canada was enjoying a 58% increase in trials of its health-focused menu. Lighter Choices was so successful that it was picked up by the U.S. in 2003.

Beyond introducing unique product offerings, the brand in Canada also targeted kids, moms with kids, and young adults. Instead of trying to be everything for everyone, it used sports, music and fashion to appeal to the latter demographic, leveraging hockey star Wayne Gretzky, sponsoring the Olympics and offering free music through its Big Mac Meal Tracks promotion.

Canada's performance during this period made it a leader among markets. While the global brand saw a decrease in sales of 3.7% in March 2003, after monthly declines all through 2002, Canada saw the reverse: 2% growth in sales in 2002 and 9% growth during 2003. It wouldn't be the last time Canada showed the way.

TRANSPARENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

A part of the demographic shift towards healthier menu items in the early 2000s reflected a growing concern over the negative effects of fatty food and sugary drinks, with schools in the U.S. getting rid of soft drink vending machines and considering banning fatty snacks. These concerns prompted class action suits filed against McDonald's for promoting obesity and other health problems, while hospitals began removing McDonald's franchises.

From products to people

One of the more engaging initiatives in recent years was the 2019 “Friends Wanted” recruitment campaign. Even though 75% of McDonald’s employees are under 25, research revealed that many in this demographic would not even consider working at the QSR for fear of being judged poorly by their friends.

To increase applications, McDonald’s worked with its long-time AOR Cossette to try to understand how they could overcome this barrier. Two insights emerged from research. One, youth want most from their first job is to work with friends. And two, what employees like most about McDonald’s is their relationship with their co-workers. So the brand created an integrated campaign that encouraged friends to apply together, interview together and work together.

Again, the results were significant. The first month of the campaign saw more than 75,000 new applicants. Facebook brand lift performance tracking for the campaign was the highest ever seen for any brand in Canada. Job interest increased 42%, recommendations jumped 29%, ad recall was +30.4 pts (216% above norm), and market awareness rose 154%.



While the brand introduced healthier items in response to these concerns, the online rumour mill still roiled with questions about the contents of its products. McDonald’s Canada took steps to address the problem.

It began in 2011 with its All-Access Moms program that gave four Canadian moms a behind-the-scenes look at how the company operates. The participants were then asked to share what they learned on their blogs and social channels.

But it really put its feet in the fire with the 2012 launch of the “Our Food, Your Questions” microsite, where anyone could ask the brand anything they wanted to know about how its products are made. With the help of Tribal Worldwide (then known as Tribal DDB), answers were made available in real-time so they could be easily shared on social media. The brand created 15 ads with responses in English and French, answering questions about everything from how the food is photographed to how its meat is processed.

The results were phenomenal. They expected 3,000 inquiries, but got 15,000. More than 1.6 million people spent an average of five minutes on the site. Questions and answers were shared six million times, with a global reach of more than 83 billion impressions. Almost 600 news outlets picked it up and it had a PR reach of more



than 132 million impressions. Tribal Worldwide and McDonald’s won the Grand Prix at AToMiC and Best of the Best at the CMAs in 2013. The platform was subsequently reprised in markets around the world.

The next chapter in the quest for transparency was to connect consumers to the farmers from whom McDonald’s Canada sourced its ingredients. The “Not Without Canadian Farmers” campaign (also developed by Tribal in 2015) depicted images of McDonald’s products, with a piece of food that came from a Canadian farmer removed from the image. Later that year, the Cossette-created “Great Canadian Taste Adventure” campaign featured a rotating roster of limited-time menu items with ingredients sourced from different

regions of the country. And in 2020, Cossette helped develop “Back to the Farm,” showing “the future” of Canadian sustainable beef ranching by speaking to young cattle farmers in southern Alberta.

To keep the company’s commitment to transparency going, in 2019, McDonald’s and Cossette created the “see-through kitchen,” an activation that saw the conversion of a shipping container into a glass-clad McDonald’s kitchen, allowing passersby to see how their favourite menu items are made.

These campaigns demonstrated that the brand’s



Since 1967

Congrats on 55 years, McDonald's Canada.
Thank you for making us part of your true North team.



cossette

TRACK



commitment to transparency was not just one campaign long. Once again, McDonald's Canada showed leadership, not only among the larger McDonald's family but also the QSR industry in general – because, from transparency, it's a small step to sustainability.

In a 2018 Greenpeace audit of trash collected from Canadian shorelines, Nestlé, Tim Hortons, PepsiCo, Coca-Cola and McDonald's, were the worst offenders. So, in 2019, McDonald's Canada began to experiment with "lightweight" coffee cups by removing one layer of paper from its outer surface – a move that eliminated more than 123 tons of paper. The cups also feature an aqueous coating that's acceptable in recycling streams. The effort extended to wooden cutlery and stir sticks, paper straws and napkins produced with recycled fibers. It's all part of the company's goal of sourcing 100% of its guest packaging from renewable and/or recycled sources by 2025.

LOOKING AHEAD

Buetikofer inherits a brand that has become one of the most highly recognized in Canada. It's also one of the most active from a communications perspective, running 50 annual campaigns led by Cossette (creative), OMD (media) and Weber Shandwick (PR). While Buetikofer's got a solid foundation to build on, she will be one of the busiest CMOs.

"We want to continue to connect with consumers through our campaigns, and we want to do the same thing through the channels that we're using and how we're using them," says Buetikofer. "You're certainly starting to see more use of social channels and different digital channels, video activations and static and display activations. You can expect to see much more of that in the future."

The pandemic demonstrated that there is still strong brand love. "We learned during the pandemic that consumers do love our core food and our core icons, and there's comfort in that," continues Buetikofer. "We learned that the foundation we have with some of those core icons and equities remains positive." A brand couldn't hope for more. 🍔



Loyalty is digital

During her seven successful years as CMO at McDonald's Canada, Benoit left a strong legacy for her successor, Alyssa Buetikofer. Beyond the many integrated campaigns she led, Benoit ushered the brand into the digital age, increasing its proportion of marketing spend from 15% of the budget in 2014 to 50% in 2021.

In late 2021 McDonald's Canada launched MyMcDonald's Rewards, an app that allows customers to earn points on every order for free rewards like a Big Mac, McFlurry, Premium Roast Coffee or McMuffin. The digital upgrade of the sticker-based McCafe Mobile Rewards program is the latest in a long line of programs designed to keep brand love alive.

According to Buetikofer, the brand's strategic focus continues to be on digital growth. "We are absolutely doubling down on the 'three D's': digital, delivery and drive-through. We're focused on convenience, personalization and allowing customers to order through the channels that make sense for them."

Although the pandemic certainly accelerated the use of delivery and drive-through channels, Benoit had previously built a digital toolbox with which to encourage consumer engagement, both in terms of marketing communications and customer experience. An example is the 2019 "Snapchat Door," created to increase awareness and trial of the national launch of McDelivery via Uber

Eats and SkipTheDishes. The augmented reality program allowed customers to scan transit-shelter ads with their phone and view a 3D version of the door on their devices. A hand appeared and knocked on the virtual door, which opened to reveal a \$5 coupon.

Snapchat and Twitch have been go-to platforms for the brand in recent years. To celebrate National French Fry Day in 2018, the brand gave customers the opportunity to share their love for fries by placing a drive-thru speaker at the top of Grouse Mountain in Vancouver. The "Friestream" activation incorporated the McDonald's mobile app by live-streaming a broadcast of social media comments and videos from people across the country. The campaign engaged over 800,000 viewers and generated over 40 million media impressions.

The longstanding annual Monopoly contest is another example of how the brand is using digital to drive loyalty, with many components of the contest digitized to make it accessible through the McDonald's app. In the 2021 edition, players were entered into a weekly \$5,000 draw when they placed a mobile order, scanned their McDonald's Rewards card or redeemed an offer on the McDonald's app.

THE

INDIE

LIST



Welcome to the agency of now
resilience & reinvention

Visionary agencies know if they don't take the opportunity to reshape the future, the future will reshape them. Here's what Canada's agency leaders expect from the evolution of marketing and agencies' unfolding role.

Colouring outside the lines

Zulu Alpha Kilo is redefining what an agency is and does



For the launch of Notes IPA from brewery SingleCut, Zulu created a can with a label design based on a guitar fretboard, complete with finger positions for the four basic chords used in rock music and an opening tab in the shape of a guitar pick.

THE LAST 21 MONTHS have made it clear that it takes more than a pandemic to take down Toronto's Zulu Alpha Kilo. In fact, it seems to have pushed them to even greater heights.

"We've got really great momentum and have emerged stronger from this pandemic," says chief creative officer & chairman Zak Mroueh. "We've solidified the creative leadership group and made key moves that have set us up for the decade ahead."

Those moves include taking control of its future with the purchase of its own building, as the agency designs a hybrid working space for post-pandemic times. In 2021, Mroueh was also further freed up to focus on the shop's creative product when he promoted long-time president and partner Mike Sutton to take on his CEO duties.

Since founding the agency in 2008, Mroueh and his team have been building Zulu's global creative reputation year after year. 2021 was no exception and proved to be the best in the agency's 13-year history.

The Toronto indie was the most awarded globally at Ad Age's Small Agency of the Year competition for firms with headcount of 150 and less (Zulu has 130 staff). It took home multiple golds for media innovation and digital, picking up International Agency of the Year silver along the way. *Forbes* and *Fast Company*



TOP: Zulu Alpha Kilo designed the Tough Turban for Pfaff Harley-Davidson with Sikh bikers in mind. It offers the protective properties of a regulation helmet, constructed with a custom fabric that hardens on impact but which can be folded and unfolded.

BOTTOM: Zulu created a campaign for HomeEquity Bank built around vignettes featuring home-owning seniors responding cheekily when their kids or grandkids suggest selling, empowering retirees to stay in the home they love.



recognized its creative work as among the year's most innovative.

Across the Atlantic, the UK's The Drum Awards named ZAK global agency of the year. In Europe, the agency was also Independent Agency of the Year and the most awarded in the world at the Epica Awards, judged by the world's trade journalists. And finally, the New York Festivals' 2021 AME Report ranked them number-one agency globally for the effectiveness of their work.

This international acclaim has come from groundbreaking work such as Notes IPA for Queens, NY-based craft brewer SingleCut. Zulu created four distinct beer labels, each displaying foundational guitar chord finger placements along with a unique custom opening tab in the shape of a guitar pick. Once opened, the pick actually can be used to play a guitar.

For Pfaff Harley-Davidson, the shop created Tough Turban, using technologically advanced Dyneema fabric that can be folded like traditional Sikh headwear but which hardens on impact, thus allowing Sikh motorcyclists to honour their cultural identity while protecting themselves from injury.

These projects demonstrate how ZAK is colouring outside the lines of the traditional ad agency model by extending its reach into the realms of experience design and product innovation – areas more typically associated with management consultants and industrial design firms.

Zulu's experience-based ideation can also be seen in much of its other innovative work.

Canadians' spending was erratic and unpredictable during the pandemic's second year, so for long-time client Interac, Zulu created the "Sound of Spending" – the first digital tool that

transforms spending data into musical notes. An algorithm also enabled Canadians to convert their spending into a personal music track. Individuals could then compare their own spending habits against the national average as represented by the soundwave.

To keep clothing retailer Harry Rosen top of mind and drive traffic online in a time of endless video calls, the shop devised a shirt in the same shade of green needed for green-screening. The garment debuted with a video demonstrating its ability to match vibrant fabric patterns with Zoom backgrounds.

"Although the pandemic has made for an odd couple of years, we're focused on the future and our client partnerships feel stronger. We found another gear strategically and creatively and as a result, many of our clients have had record business results," says Sutton.

The firm's unconventional thinking has not been lost on more conventional media, either. To launch the new 2021 Ascent – Subaru's biggest vehicle – Zulu created a series of custom-built OOH ads that exceed the size of the media space provided. The first poster ventured beyond the frame to fill the wall. The second needed to be curved to fit into the regulation metal frame. For the last execution, concertina folds help the final poster fit behind glass.

Whether it's playing in places where no agency has gone before, or busting paradigms in more familiar media territory, Zulu Alpha Kilo continues to raise the industry bar.



CONTACT:

Mike Sutton

President & CEO

INeedANewAgency@zulualphakilo.com



TOP: To launch Harry Rosen's line of men's grooming products, Zulu changed the retailer's sign at its flagship Toronto store to "Hairy" Rosen. Prominent tastemakers posted pics of themselves in front of the sign, exceeding the reach and engagement of any previous social campaign by 50% and earning over 40 million media impressions.

BOTTOM: For an OOH execution for Subaru, Zulu ventured outside the confines of the media space to visually underline the size of the carmaker's biggest vehicle.



TOP: To help HomeEquity Bank and the Legion National Foundation give Canadians a better understanding of the hardships Canadian soldiers endured during WW2, Zulu produced an authentic recreation of a field ration kit and delivered it to people on Remembrance Day through DoorDash.

BOTTOM: Interac looked to educate Canadians about national spending habits as well as their own, so Zulu used consumer spending data to compose unique musical pieces. When spending is high, the tone and tempo of the music rise; when spending is lower, the tone and tempo drop.



Seeing what others don't see

Arrivals + Departures is scoring both on traditional platforms and with new approaches



Angry Orchard Hard Cider beverages are made with 50% less sugar than leading competitors, and to show consumers they are “Not So Sweet,” the brand’s angry tree mascot chirps at passersby about their fashion choices and selfie-snapping behaviour.

IT’S HARD TO STAND OUT when everyone says they’re in the business of standing out.

For Arrivals + Departures, standing out might come more naturally when you consider where it started: Halifax. Founded by serial entrepreneur Paul LeBlanc in 1997 as Extreme Group, the regional firm earned a reputation for creatively punching above its weight, winning awards at Cannes and attracting talent from other markets to join them on the edge of the Atlantic. In 2008, the firm opened its doors in Toronto.

That’s when Toronto president Mike Bevacqua says he was “plucked from a multinational machine” to help build the Toronto office. He talks about being from the GTA and joining a brand that, unlike Toronto-born shops, had a culture rooted in people and good old East Coast values. He found it had an environment of collaboration, respect and humility infused with a hungry, entrepreneurial energy.

As the agency gained momentum and grew with the acquisitions of Blammo Worldwide and BlueBand Digital, in 2016 the partners chose to reposition and rename the brand Arrivals + Departures.

As Bevacqua tells it, “It’s inspired by the notion of travel and getting out and seeing the world and what it has to offer. We depart full of anticipation, excitement, and fear only to return more courageous, inspired and informed. Our goal is to challenge the status quo, to see what no one else sees, to discover what no one else has discovered.”

Earlier this year, Bevacqua and partners Martin Delaney (Halifax president and chief strategist) and Daniel Tolensky (CFO and COO) officially bought the agency from LeBlanc. A+D currently employs more than 60 staff across the two cities.

A+D showed its left-field thinking in the “For the Flavourful” campaign for Boston Beer Company’s Truly Hard Seltzer, distributed and marketed in Canada by Moosehead Breweries. The largest lineup of flavors in the category provided a strategic opportunity to surprise Canadian drinkers with something different grounded in creative culture.

Instead of producing an ad, A+D leveraged PlantWave technology to capture actual fruit biorhythmic sounds from Truly’s flavours. Those were compiled into a sample sound pack emerging Canadian musicians used to create original songs for a branded Spotify summer playlist, along with distribution of the sound pack on music creator site Landr.

A+D partnered with Pet Valu earlier this year. “Pet ownership spiked during COVID-19,” Bevacqua notes. “Your dog or cat got used to you being around 24/7, but as lockdowns stopped and you started going back to work, suddenly your pet goes into anxiety mode. Knowing that what pets love about their owners is their scent, we came up with the idea of taking a piece of fabric with your scent on it and making a stuffed toy out of it so your pet would have a reminder of you while you are away.”

Despite the uniqueness of those campaigns, A+D doesn’t shy away from impactful 30-second spots. For former client SkipTheDishes, A+D built a campaign around actor Jon Hamm of *Mad Men* fame. “We hadn’t seen a celebrity campaign in this market in a while. This really showed what we’re capable of,” says Bevacqua. For a brand with basically the same functionality as its competitors, differentiation would have to come in the ads. And it worked. The campaign took SkipTheDishes to number one in a field of international players including Uber Eats, DoorDash and Foodora.

It’s been a breakout year for A+D, with new business wins also including Re/Max Canada, Sabra Dipping Company, Mydoh, Workers’ Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, GE Appliances, Nova Scotia SPCA and Twisted Tea for Moosehead Breweries.

Bevacqua is sanguine about A+D’s future as a feisty indie. “I don’t think clients are buying agency brands today,” he says. “They’re buying people and culture. And in my experience, the best work comes from dialed-in relationships where the tough conversations we’re having with our clients are just as easy to have as the good ones.”



This Effie Award-winning campaign for the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science looked to raise awareness of med-lab techs as a key component of the medical system during the pandemic. The lab coat is covered in microtext illustrating the 1.2 million different lab tests these workers perform in a typical day.



Tourism in Atlantic Canada has become increasingly competitive in the past decade. For Tourism PEI, A+D focused on creating a unique and revitalizing invitation to visit Canada's smallest province.



Former client SkipTheDishes made its mark on Canadians through TV spots featuring *Mad Men*'s Jon Hamm and some very hammy copy. Who can forget "Bressert" or "An Ordinary Canadian Guy" (although Hamm was born in St Louis)? The spots pushed the brand to the top of its category and raised A+D's profile.



To let consumers know Truly Hard Seltzer offers refreshing flavors, A+D used digital technology to capture biorhythmic sounds from the actual fruit in Truly's lineup that inspired 12 original songs for a branded Spotify playlist with the sound pack available on Landr.



Noticing pet ownership adoption rates had skyrocketed during the pandemic, A+D helped Pet Valu with the idea of making stuffed toys out of pieces of pet owners' fabrics containing their scent, quelling pets' separation anxiety when owners are back at the office.



For easycanfinancial, A+D welded a Dodge van to a cut-down Smart car and placed the apparently overturned vehicle at various locations to highlight the lender's new auto-loan offering.



CONTACT:
Mike Bevacqua
Partner, President - Toronto
mike.bevacqua@arrivalsdepartures.com

Consumer-driven solutions win the room

Agnostic's research-backed philosophy shows the benefits of acting on insights



Working with Truss Beverages, Agnostic created a new LCBO (Local Cannabis Beverage Outlet) in partnership with Toronto retailer Miss Jones to draw attention to the unfair advantages alcohol retail has over cannabis beverage retail.

AGNOSTIC IS A FULL-SERVICE Toronto-based agency driven by the overarching ethos “better thinking, better results.”

And the challenges of the past year or so have demanded a lot of the former to achieve the latter.

But the fact that COVID-19 tore up the playbook may have been a blessing in disguise, says Agnostic president Sarah Crabbe. As the landscape shifted under everyone's feet, clients and agencies had to be open to solutions they might not have considered before. Crabbe believes that's led to a more informed approach – and that can't help but improve the work.

“It gave us the ability to tell clients, ‘This is what we need to do. This is the research we have. This is what is happening in the world,’” she says. “And people were listening like never before. They were not overly dependent on one channel over the other. What they really wanted was clear counsel, sound insights and research-backed thinking. They want

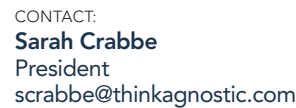


Agnostic worked with Metro to launch My Health My Choices, a guide that allows customers to easily shop from over 52 product attributes including keto, gluten free and dairy free. Metro engaged registered dietician Abbey Sharp as spokesperson, and she appeared in broadcast segments and generated content for Instagram and YouTube.



Meanwhile, for carsharing company Turo, Agnostic put a spotlight on the fact that the platform was one of the only places where consumers could test drive the much-desired model Y Tesla, driving huge interest in Turo as a result.

"When we started almost three years ago, I wanted to see what better thinking could look like," says Crabbe. "Our plan is to continue this fast-paced growth and expand into the health space, but not lose sight of the work that we are committed to doing, and the principles that have driven us from the very start."



BOTTOM: Celebrating Canadians taking their “Best Shot” by getting the COVID-19 vaccine, Harvey’s partnered with pop-up vaccination clinics across the GTA. Once attendees received their shot, they were greeted by the Harvey’s RV upon exit and could receive a free burger.

The difference intellectual diversity makes

A new leadership team and reimagined offering reenergizes Doug & Partners



The Junction Toronto office of Doug & Partners

AS MARK TWAIN ONCE SAID, TO STAND STILL is to fall behind.

After almost 20 years in business, Doug Robinson, founder of Toronto's Doug & Partners, felt his agency was indeed standing still. He felt it was time for a wholesale reimagining of the company. Following the departure of some key people, he believed he had a new strategic canvas on which to envision his company's future.

Within a year, Robinson hired ECD Marta Hooper, head of client service Jessica Goldberg, managing director Christine Scott, head of planning Meg Kerr, and head of social/content Matthew Taylor. With virtually the entire senior leadership team overhauled at the 40-strong agency, the soul searching began. Scott was ready. "When I met with Doug, we connected on this idea of thinking about things differently," she says.

They understood that doing things differently causes discomfort. "I'm a woman of color, so I've been living in discomfort my entire life," Scott says. "For me, discomfort is important – it's where growth happens." They also agreed that a deliberate focus on intellectual diversity would be their differentiator. While this is a well-known concept in the theory and practice of innovation, it's not widely understood in marketing communications.

"Things are changing at the speed of light," Robinson says. "The problems we encounter are more complex, and if we want to

continue solving them for our clients, we need to come at them with a different perspective. Every time we see a problem, we all need to ask ourselves, 'What's another way of looking at this? How do we solve this? Who is the right person to solve it?'"

A convention D&P would like to leave behind is the lengthy process by which insights are gathered, briefs written, and creative ideas developed. Kerr says the agency has asked itself, "'How can we be faster? How can we design an approach that allows us to pivot when we need to?' I'm excited to be part of that process."

She's also excited to be where values are taken seriously, adding, "I've never joined a firm that made a discussion of their values such a big part of the onboarding process. I was impressed that this isn't just lip service or something you stick on your website or in your training manual. D&P really holds you to account."

Striving to be capable of addressing a variety of challenges, the firm's offer is also diverse, including integrated communications, design and branding, strategic planning, digital marketing, social content and experiential marketing.

It delivers these services to an equally diverse portfolio of clients. For Valens, D&P delivered new product identity and design systems, a digital and social launch campaign and an experiential strategy. For Ontario Honda Dealers Association the agency designed and deployed monthly retail promotional strategy, custom video and media content, and sponsorship and influencer support.

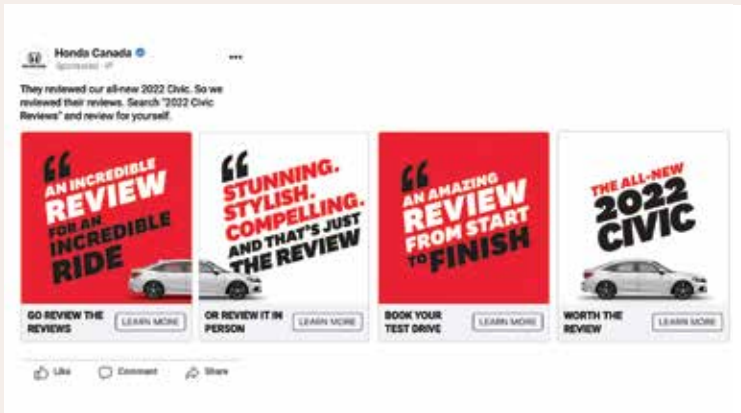
To rekindle awareness of the University of New Brunswick – Canada's oldest English-language university – the firm provided online video, social, and digital display illustrating that "UNB is anywhere students are making a difference."

For Plan International Canada, D&P crafted online video, digital display, social, and OOH to get the word out about their "Give a Goat" gift-giving campaign. And for Period Purse, a charity dedicated to providing marginalized women with access to free menstrual products, D&P created online videos, print, social, and digital display that use humour to bust the taboo around this natural function.

Other ongoing clients for which the agency has done award-winning work include Reliance Home Comfort and Go RVing. Another notable client is telco Primus, which was bought by Distributel in early 2021, calling for a new marketing direction. For the latter, Robinson says, "The work we're doing is very broad and traditional in one way, but then completely new and innovative in others. This duality in thinking is what we are going to be bringing to all clients moving forward, and the future is already looking bright."



Moving quietly and carrying a fresh, big bud – Doug & Partners built the new brand Contraband, which is relentlessly determined to exceed the expectations of the most discerning, OG cannabis users.



D&P leveraged industry buzz around the 2022 Honda Civic with a social and influencer campaign that inspired consumers to get in on the reviewing fun – preferably by booking a test drive at their local dealership.



Influenced by the GOAT, D&P is helping spread the Gifts of Hope giving spirit with the help of a fresh, soft, and kind new face for Plan International Canada.



Go RVing helped people reconnect with their “wildhood” by reminding them that “a life well-lived is a life well-travelled.”



Pulling no punches, D&P designed a new visual and verbal identity for cannabis brand Versus, which is not afraid to deliver the best weed at the best price.



CONTACT:
Christine Scott
 Managing Director
 christine@dougpartners.com



The **new** establishment --- innovators

Know someone who's making their mark in the workplace?

The New Establishment: Innovators program is looking for the next crop of junior and mid-level professionals who are changing the Canadian communications industry.

**Does a coworker who's challenged conventions
and triggered big change come to mind?**

Nominate original thinkers and doers for consideration (and glory!)

The nominees may come from any side of the business: agencies, brands, vendors, media companies, tech partners and more. They are the individuals whose grit, initiative and accomplishments the industry should know about.

Nominations are open until February 11, 2022.

newestablishment.strategyonline.ca/innovators

Master storytellers

Target reveals what it takes to create a best seller



WHEN ASKED “WHAT’S NEW?” Target founder Noel O’Dea doesn’t skip a beat. “Well, this morning I saw God walking around Newfoundland,” he replies. “When I asked why, God said, ‘I’m working from home today.’” It’s exactly the kind of response you’d expect from a natural-born storyteller.

No surprise, then, that Target repeatedly tops Canada’s best seller list when it comes to travel and tourism. AOR for Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism since 2005, Target is the author of “Find Yourself,” which O’Dea notes has won more than 400 awards for creativity, brand building, and advertising effectiveness, and has dramatically reshaped brand perceptions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

“Find Yourself” has stayed true to Target’s original brand positioning and creative platform. Targeting highly literate and sophisticated travellers, each new story episode in this 16-year campaign positions Newfoundland and Labrador as an exotic and creative place unlike any other – an enigma wrapped in intelligent wit and humanity.

“Chapter by chapter, we’ve been relentlessly building powerful brand equity in the marketplace,” says Catherine Kelly, Target’s director on tourism. “With masterbrand continuity, we can leverage modest advertising budgets to deliver outstanding business results.”

“Many brands are restless, always searching for something new and shiny or trendy,” says O’Dea, director of strategic and creative planning. “We invest in upfront thinking to discover the elusive source of a brand’s differentiation and competitive advantage – and we make that truth the heart and soul of the brand’s story.” Kelly adds, “Storytelling is a powerful business tool.”

The 40 storytellers at Target who created the concept of St. John’s “Jellybean Row” of brightly colored houses and invoked the “Flat Earth Society” in a campaign romancing the destination, have been equally innovative in the digital world – creating IcebergFinder.com, which uses NASA satellites; harnessing

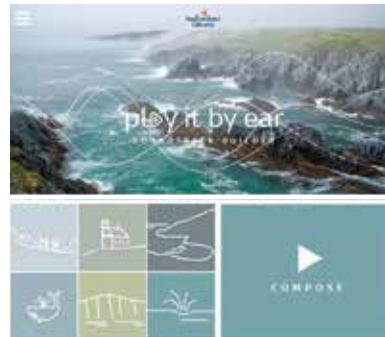
Target created the world’s first ads which require audiences to solve a crossword puzzle to reveal the headline. This interactive campaign rewarded curious-minded travellers dreaming about escaping lock-down. The ads became the pastime. High involvement made this chapter another best seller.

mobile phone gyro technology and contextual geotargeting for “Explorers Wanted” to curate #ExploreNLTour pic sharing on Instagram; and convey the unique spirit of Newfoundland and Labrador through storytelling at TallTrueandTangled.com with tales such as “The World’s Shortest Story.”

Of course, it helps that the agency is self-sufficient and fully-resourced in-house with media sitting side-by-side with digital planning and production.

But strategy’s inaugural Agency of the Year winner is known for more than tourism; Target’s client list spans airlines, beer, cannabis, retail gas, CPG and financial services.

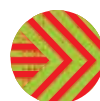
Using the humanity and wit for which both Newfoundland and the agency are known, Target’s been inventing, naming, branding, renovating, launching and growing brands since 1980. And it continues to help clients reap the rewards of a story well told, and make the cash register ring.



Soundtrack Builder is an innovative brand engagement tool created and produced by Target. Users create custom 0:24 video stories by selecting from hundreds of pre-recorded sounds, each synced to video clips, with a simple click, drag and drop. Over 30,000 custom videos were created, and user sessions averaged seven minutes.



For Work Remote NL, Target geotargeted professionals seeking to escape the pain points of urban life. This multi-media campaign married logic with emotion, targeting vertical industries conducive to working remotely, using mobile tracking to target commuters, and employing social listening to reach people with lifestyle and affordability angst.



CONTACT:
Noel O’Dea
Director of strategic and creative planning
noda@targetmarketing.ca

Helping brave brands grow

Rain cuts through the clutter to help clients succeed



The lobby of Rain's Toronto office

IN TODAY'S SATURATED MARKETPLACE, the only way for brands to grow is by offering up something unique, unexpected, and truly valuable.

Or, as Rain CEO John Yorke says, "Growth requires being brave enough to do things differently and not just follow the crowd. Doing it like the other guys just won't cut it."

The agency – with offices in Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver – collaborates with clients of all shapes and sizes looking to break through, differentiate, and stand out. Leading with strategy, Rain works with them to find the best and most efficient way to do this – be it in new brand positioning, evolved design, campaigns, or reimagining owned properties such as in-store, web and social.

Rain put this approach in gear when it took on the Freedom Mobile account in 2017. Rising from the ashes of the former Wind Mobile, Freedom offered Rain and client Shaw Communications a chance to take a swing at the big three telcos. As history has shown, challenging the telecom triopoly is a blood sport in this country. It takes a scrappy outfit to wade into that battle.

With Freedom under its belt, Rain – which has 40 staff and reaches out to its network of creatives as needed – began to attract other brands looking to prove they are truly different.



For Quatreau, a cannabis beverage from Constellation Brands and Canopy Growth, Rain determined the target customer and developed positioning, naming, and brand identity.



It helped Meridian Credit Union develop and launch Motusbank, a digital bank that helps younger Canadians be more empowered financially. The fintech views customers not as clients, but as members, encouraging constant feedback and using it to shape its offers. Rain helped develop positioning, name, logo and overall design.

"We took a step back to understand the white space," says chief strategy officer Laura Davis-Saville. "We always start by working to understand what is the real opportunity to differentiate based on what we want to achieve. Creative then stems from this foundation."

Rain also helped the Alberta Securities Commission breakthrough to Gen Z, a new at-risk audience for investment fraud, with a unique campaign and digital tool.

"Research showed that investment fraud is growing among younger Albertans," says Davis-Saville. "So we developed a bold campaign featuring a chatbot that TikTok influencers used to educate people 18 to 30 about the problem."

It was a unique way to go to market for a financial organization that had been quite traditional. Davis-Saville continues, "We saw huge pickup from the press and amazing engagement scores. Those are the rewards for being brave enough to do things differently."

Bravery is especially essential for brands in nascent categories. Davis-Saville is particularly proud of Rain's work for Canopy Growth Quatreau, Canada's first CBD sparkling water, which launched in 2020. The agency collaborated on developing and branding the product that can deliver "the buzz without the guilt" to health-conscious consumers. "We did everything from deciding who the product would be for, to positioning, naming, and brand identity," she says.

And then there's Entomo Farms, North America's largest cricket farm. "They wanted to develop a B2C brand that would help ease people into cricket products because there's obviously a big resistance," Davis-Saville explains. "So to increase consumer interest, we developed a line of family-friendly snacks infused with cricket-protein powder – a great source of protein, very sustainable and good for the planet."

To overcome consumer reluctance, Rain named the brand Actually Foods and built its positioning and story around the notion of being 'Actually' delicious, 'Actually' sustainable, and 'Actually' nutritious. "We got to sit on the tasting panel as they developed the product," Davis-Saville continues. "We dig deep with our clients and get involved in not only the branding, but also the product development, because they're so intertwined."

Rain has brought its growth philosophy to large clients including Ontario Toyota Dealers, Stanley Black & Decker, and Centennial College, for which the agency is launching new brand work this year. Elsewhere, recent wins include the Yale Medicine, the Joseph Brant Hospital Foundation, and the Government of Canada.

Whether it's a new brand in an emerging category or an established brand looking to accelerate growth, Rain inspires them to challenge the status quo and prove they offer something no other brand can.



CONTACT:
John Yorke
CEO
johny@rain43.com

TOP: To get Canadians past the "ick factor" of eating insect protein, research showed interest increased when it's made part of a familiar food such as puffs. Working for Entomo Farms, Rain built the brand design, positioning and story and came up with the name Actually Foods.

BOTTOM: Rain helped hone the narrative for the Future Skills Center, using true stories in a Canada-wide campaign to ensure its role in future-proofing the Canadian workforce is felt.



Rain developed a cheeky campaign for the Alberta Securities Commission featuring a chatbot used by TikTok influencers to educate Gen Zers about fraudulent investment opportunities.

Leading the transformation

Art & Science significantly ups its strategy game to help shape the future of brands



After 32 years as the number-two mortgage insurance provider, Sagen moved into the number one spot after a complete rebrand by Art & Science.

AS 2020 FORCED A SHIFT TO DIGITAL, it brought with it an unprecedented level of soul searching. With the world temporarily on pause, brands had a chance to take a breath and evaluate what and where they wanted to be.

"I think we've seen more opportunities from a brand strategy standpoint," says Art & Science president Spencer Saunders. "Brands are going through this moment of disruption, and it's an opportunity to refine and reflect on what's working and what isn't."

Traditionally, digital was often seen as a lower funnel experience. But with growing expectation on effectiveness and ROI, it's not just about pulling off executions. It's about coming up with a holistic media strategy that's based on evidence and good data – something that can move the dial.

And you'd expect an agency named Art & Science to lead the charge when it comes to the marriage of creativity and analytics. While the Toronto-based shop's roots might be in digital, over the past few years it has evolved into a transformational brand agency. It's seeing the world from a wide-angle lens and, as Saunders puts it, "designing the future of brands."

"Our emphasis is on the effectiveness of our campaigns and all our marketing and communications efforts," he adds. "It's a story that's landing incredibly well right now. If you have to go digital, you want to work with the folks obsessed with measurement but also with creativity and innovation."

Art & Science added a half dozen new clients in 2021, including California hair-care brand T3 and Toronto indie Kingsway College School. Saunders says the agency typically has about 50 clients on its roster with requirements ranging from one-off projects to long-term campaigns.

You can see bigger-picture thinking in the agency's work for mortgage insurance company Sagen. Acquired by Brookfield the year prior, the client needed a complete rethink, including a new

brand strategy, name (its previous moniker was Genworth Canada) and design. The result? After 32 years as the number-two mortgage insurance provider, the company moved into the number one position earlier this year.

A&S also developed and introduced drum manufacturer Sabian's new brand – "Play Your Way" – an initiative that welcomed a younger, more diverse audience and grew market share globally.

On the cause front, the agency also landed a national campaign for the Canadian Cancer Society, tackling the issue of higher smoking rates in the LGBTQI2S+ community. Created in combination with the Ontario Tobacco Research Unit, the social media-based campaign and research initiative kicked off with pilots in Toronto, Montreal and Thunder Bay in January, looking to create a conversation around the topic.

Over the last year, the decade-old shop has hired more than a dozen people to answer the call for more transformational work – including

VP of strategy Marcel Zierfuss – to reach a bench strength of about 46. It's also in the process of rolling out its own new brand identity in the coming year.

"The world is going to become increasingly digital," Saunders says of the agency's current growth. "Clients appreciate and have an appetite for speed and agility – and they're going to expect that the work will deliver true and real value."



Art & Science developed drum maker Sabian's new brand "Play Your Way," an initiative that welcomed a younger, more diverse audience and grew market share globally.



CONTACT:
Spencer Saunders
President
spence@artscience.ca

A decade of rewards from risk

G&G's bold thinking has stood the test of time



G&G fielded the quietly arresting PSA “The House with No Escape” for the Assaulted Women’s Helpline, highlighting a horrifying reality for the one-in-four Canadian women who have experienced domestic abuse.

TEN YEARS AGO, Giants & Gentlemen started with nothing except a mission to bring bold ideas to life with integrity. There have since been many developments at the Toronto brand-building agency, and never more so than in the past year.

Change began with co-founders Natalie Armata and Alanna Nathanson becoming sole agency owners. One of their first moves was to bring on industry vet Sally McConnell, who took on the role of VP Operations. (She joins VP business lead Mary Ruf and VP head of strategy Doug Potwin on the senior leadership team.) They also added Becky May as an ACD.

The agency added new clients including Dr. Bernstein Diet & Health Clinics and Clover Leaf, and took on ambitious new projects for Tokyo Smoke and RBC Royal Bank. And with all this change afoot, it decided to celebrate its 10th anniversary by rolling out a new identity – G&G – along with a fresh brand rethink. Stay tuned.

But Nathanson insists G&G’s approach hasn’t changed. It continues to offer a range of services encompassing 360° planning, brand positioning and identity, design, creative production, social and experiential. It still prides itself on a culture of openness and collaboration, and she says the senior team remains hands-on. This is not an agency obsessed with hierarchy. Ideas carry the day.

And you can see that in the last year’s work. G&G hasn’t been afraid to take risks and challenge the expected while delivering results.

G&G certainly went with the unexpected with a centaur character touting Dr. Oetker Momenti at-home pizzas, comparing

the two components of the mythical half man/half horse creature to the snack that is both healthy and tastes great. The project, launched in January, features 15-second TV and online video spots, as well as six-second cut-downs across YouTube and social media.

G&G also created “The Giuseppe Shoppe,” an online destination where Dr. Oetker fans can buy wearables such as shirts bearing the slogan “I’m with Pizza” or pizza car air fresheners. The Shoppe realized an 18% conversion rate of site traffic to orders and an average order value well over \$50.

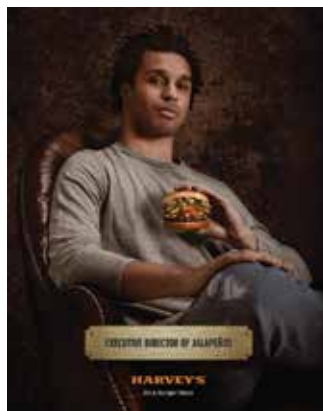
Elsewhere, the agency personalized client Enercare’s range of protection plans by bringing to life that feeling of helplessness when homes seem to have a mind of their own.

“From a strategic perspective, the category is very functional and generally lacks insight or emotion – we wanted to be different,” says Armata. “We personified homes and asked our audience: do you own your house or does your house own you?” She notes that Enercare’s plan sales have increased dramatically since the advertising launched versus previous years.

And, displaying its range and presence in the cause area, G&G fielded a quietly arresting PSA campaign for the Assaulted Women’s Helpline, reminding people that staying home during lockdown is not safe for everyone. The key images were of houses with doors and windows bricked over, getting across the notion that living with an abusive partner is like being in prison.

Despite G&G’s evolution, what hasn’t changed is the team’s longstanding philosophy “Be brave. Be decent.”

“It means going with our gut, facing hard truths, taking risks and always being direct and open,” Nathanson explains. “It’s rooted in Natalie’s and my DNA, and it’s led to our special culture and continued success.”



For the Harvey’s “Be a Burger Boss” campaign, G&G’s Alanna Nathanson says, “We really dug into what differentiates them as a brand, which is customization.”



G&G created “The Giuseppe Shoppe,” an online destination where fans of Dr. Oetker pizzas can buy wearables.



CONTACT:
Sally McConnell
VP Operations
s.mcconnell@giantsandgents.com



strategydaily

**Stay connected with
daily brand news.**

Sign up for your free daily briefing

and get context for all the marcom news, research
& trends impacting the Canadian market.

strategyonline.ca/subscribe

Rebranded agency puts innovative model to “work” for brands

Labour combines planning and creative talent with a proven PR lens



For AutoTrader.ca, Labour pivoted during the pandemic from planned seasonal PR campaigns to hard-hitting, data-led news angles positioning the client as a key media source for insight into consumers' vehicle needs.

IT'S NO WONDER THAT an agency that uses a “work together” approach to unify multiple services now sports the name Labour.

“Our unique combination of planning, creative and PR is driving success for clients and for us as a business,” says Labour president James Loftus of an agency rebrand that launched last fall. “It’s a new brand and fresh approach with a focus on collaboration and results.”

Previously known as Co-Op, the Toronto-based agency opened in 2012 as a small, partner-led shop that focused largely on PR and relied heavily on its freelance network to execute creative. “The model worked really well for a number of years,” Loftus says, but the agency soon realized it could be far more effective by unifying its key services and bringing creative in-house.

Late last year, Pete Ross, a veteran at agencies including Taxi, DDB Canada and Grey, was hired as Labour’s creative director – joining partners Loftus and Peter Brough – to make creative a core part of its in-house team. Loftus sees the union of planning, creative and PR all under one roof as compelling. “We’ve really leaned into this ‘work together’ model to bring storytelling to the forefront and deliver truly integrated and effective solutions,” he says.

Labour’s work didn’t take long to pay dividends. In 2021, the agency won 10 awards for work on behalf of long-standing AOR clients AutoTrader.ca and WeRPN (Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario) and was named Small Agency of the Year by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC/Toronto). The latter honoured work done during the pandemic, “so it was special to us given the challenge everyone was facing, particularly our clients,” Loftus says.

WeRPN most recently teamed up with Labour to develop a multi-prong creative PR campaign to raise awareness of

the pandemic’s impact on nurses and advocate for immediate and long-term support from policymakers.

Central to the campaign was a survey administered to over 750 Ontario RPNs exploring what it means to be a nurse during COVID-19 and uncovering their challenges, sacrifices and burdens. Labour developed a compelling angle for media and went to work on creating supporting materials to help amplify the story across traditional earned and digital media channels. Assets included a fully illustrated report, a campaign infographic and social media content all built around key survey findings.

Coverage was secured in outlets including CBC News, *Breakfast Television*, *CityNews*, CP24, CTV News, the *Toronto Star*, NewsTalk 1010 and 680 News.

Loftus says this unique fusing of PR and creative helped propel the story’s success and drive real action, including sparking important conversations around the need for mental health support for nurses among policymakers and the public at a crucial time.

Loftus adds that Labour is intended for clients seeking a truly integrated partner and an agency that’s as invested in success as they are. Evidence the model is working lies in the fact that key clients have been

with the agency for more than five years.

Labour recently expanded into Quebec by tapping agency- and client-side veteran Mara Vezeau as director of its new Montreal office. Vezeau is a digital marketing and PR specialist with more than a decade in communications, including stints at L’Oréal and Bicom.

Loftus notes that “Far too often agencies fall into the trap of ‘Let’s translate this idea’” and don’t anticipate the nuances of the Quebec market. Instead, Labour’s approach is “truly national integration versus translation.” The agency has added Quebec-based clients to its AOR roster, including online classified ad platform LesPAC, restaurant chain Sushi Taxi and home improvement brand Spray-Net.

Labour is growing fast, but Loftus insists “the partners are extremely involved in all of our client business. Everyone touches the work, from account directors to PR pros to creatives.”



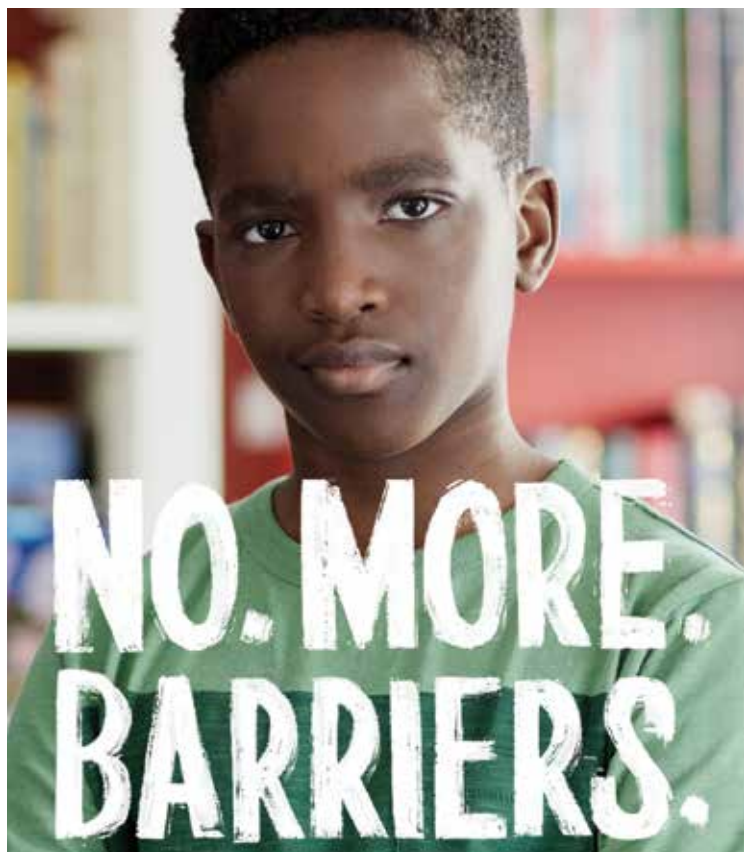
Labour worked with client the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario (WeRPN) to raise awareness for nurses’ support during the pandemic.



CONTACT:
James Loftus
President
james.loftus@labourcreative.ca

Small is beautiful. And effective.

Accessing top independent talent is the key to Round's growth



For BGC Canada, Round built a campaign around the notion that opportunity changes everything. Engaging portraits of club members connect with the audience through the eyes of the kids themselves.

AS IN ANY INDUSTRY, advertising firms start small, get big and become acquisition targets. The founders sign a non-compete and are rewarded with a big payday. But being bought isn't for everybody. Those who don't care to report to the new owners often leave and start their own shops. And the cycle begins again: start small, get big, get bought, spawn spinoffs.

Toronto-based Round, launched in 2018 by Paul Riss and Mike Davidson, fits this narrative, but only up to a point. Rather than follow the conventional route of most ad start-ups — build overhead in the form of staff and office space as the business grows — Riss and Davidson are trying to keep things as lean as possible.

Their model is project-based and custom-built. Rather than hire full-time talent, teams are customized and assembled for

each project. "We take the SWAT team approach," says Davidson. "We assemble the best team for the problem we're trying to solve, solve it and move on."

While working at big agencies, they used to be able to pick whomever they wanted for a client's business. But that all changed as New York got tougher on costs and brought in resource managers. All of a sudden it wasn't about whom they wanted, but who was available. Top talent started leaving.

They knew there was senior, independent talent out there that could form teams far superior to what many agencies were bringing to the table. "We believe in this model," asserts Davidson. "We've worked with over 150 independents who are among the best in North America. This is not something we could do if we had full-time headcount to feed because we'd have to give the same teams all the work, even though they may not always be the best choice for a particular problem."

Regarding Round's growth with this model, Davidson says, "If we add staff, it will be on the management side. We will not be hiring creative or strategic talent full time, but we'll bring in junior partners to run different parts of the business." In this way they can continue to offer customization with top talent while increasing revenue and capacity.

Round's clients tend to be mid-sized companies that don't necessarily have big marketing budgets and are challenged to access and attract top talent. Giving clients access to top talent regardless of budget is Round's sweet spot. Clients including Go Auto, Harlequin, Boston Beer Company (makers of Samuel Adams beers) and BGC Canada are perfectly suited to Round's offering.

"Harlequin's a great example," explains Riss. "It wasn't getting top talent on its business. They picked us to help reposition them and be realistic about who they are." Round followed through and built a campaign to attract younger readers with the tagline "that Harlequin feeling." Harlequin's internal creatives could then implement the new positioning across various design applications.

Payment processing start-up PayBright also benefited from Round's approach. Says Riss, "They had all the infrastructure to run their business, but they didn't have a great way to tell consumers what they were and why they should be interested. They had a small internal creative department, mostly digital designers. And that's a perfect scenario for us. We worked on the strategy and the brand and then handed them a creative toolkit for their launch campaign."

Though Round launched before the pandemic, the shift to remote working that resulted from lockdowns has worked well for the agency. It was not caught with excess overhead and was blessed with a much larger talent base from which to choose. With many firms forced to restructure, reduce overhead and unload talent, Round says its business has grown by 70% this year, and it seems perfectly positioned to take advantage of the new post-pandemic normal.



Round partnered with Holiday Films to promote RBC's golf sponsorship. The tournament announcer seen here is doing play-by-play commentary of a deal with a high-net-worth investor.



Looking to connect with a new generation of readers, Round used a multicolored logo to capture the feeling women get from Harlequin books – an intangible experience that is different for every reader.



Round utilized the power of a visual pun to get across the message about PayBright's Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) plans, which allow customers to pay partners including Wayfair and Endy in weekly or monthly instalments.



Round teamed up with hockey superstar Connor McDavid to let Canadian car buyers know that Go Auto makes vehicle shopping and ownership fun, easy and affordable.



Round created an integrated campaign for Dallas tech start-up Nickson, which furnishes apartments for young professionals who move around the country for work but don't want to drag all their chattels with them.



As with many similar organizations, Bermuda's national newspaper *The Royal Gazette* was struggling to stay relevant. Round took the high road of "digging for the truth" to communicate journalistic integrity. The campaign included print, OOH and digital ads.



CONTACT:
Mike Davidson
Founding Partner
mike@weararound.com

Helping brands navigate uncharted waters

Embracing change is the compass for business decisions at Here Be Monsters



The SnapQuote Insurance agency can return three auto insurance quotes in six seconds – the exact amount of time HBM took in this video to show how antiquated “old insurance” is in comparison.

ANYONE WHO HAS LOOKED AT a 16th-century map of the New World knows that wherever explorers had yet to tread, the coastline would abruptly end with the comment “terra incognita,” and uncharted waters would often be labelled with the warning “here be monsters.” Explorers were brave but not unwilling to express their fear of what might await them beyond the edge of the known world.

So when it came time to name their fledgling Vancouver agency in 2017, Matt Bielby, Tony Hird and Chris Raedcher decided that Here Be Monsters would be a great way to define themselves and what they stood for. The firm’s offer includes design, branding and advertising; Bielby and Hird are creative directors, and Raedcher is client services director. Although the three met at Rethink, they have cumulative experience at other agencies including Taxi and Grey Worldwide.

“We are brand explorers,” Bielby explains, “and our name promises potential clients that we will invite them



LEFTMOST: To announce the Urgent & Primary Care Centres, Here Be Monsters created a playful poster to promote the right choices of care within the VCH system. **LEFT:** HBM built the Brewing August brand around a feeling. The picnic table signals a relaxed outlook on beer and provides an iconic A-shaped monogram for the brewery, while a West Coast sunset provides the inspiration and abstraction for the packaging.



to go somewhere new, somewhere better and explore those uncharted waters together.”

Here Be Monsters is relatively small, so it's natural that they act more like helmsmen than deckhands. For example, they might work with a software company to define its brand, and then use that as the guide for designing the user experience and selecting the right crew members from their network to execute it. HBM might not be UX experts, but they can help lead those decisions from a brand perspective.

Or they can help a client make decisions about what kind of CSR initiatives would best align with its brand. Another area that could benefit is recruitment, especially in competitive markets such as technology, where start-ups have a hard time matching the six-figure offers established outfits make to recent graduates. Having a clearly defined brand can help these smaller companies attract talent that seeks purpose as well as a paycheque.

Here Be Monsters builds these brand blueprints for businesses and organizations of varying size and type.

For GUD recovery drinks (from Ezry Foods), it built the brand story, identity system and package design around the idea that sports should be both fun and functional. It hit on the insight that when we're kids we do sports for fun, but as we age, it's more like hard work. Instead of resorting to the sweaty aggression associated with other sports recovery drinks, Here Be Monsters kept it light and refreshing, using bright colours on the drink cans and design inspired by race lanes and athletic markings.

For a pair of photographers launching a Vancouver studio rental business, Here Be Monsters came up with the name Elastic

Studios to highlight the flexibility and customizability of their creative spaces. The remit included logo, identity system, and a range of applications from print to digital, such as custom water bottles, tote bags, stationery and website.

Prior to engaging Here Be Monsters, the BC Used Oil Management Association saw attempts at building awareness fall on deaf ears. Admittedly, recycling used oil is not a sexy topic. So HBM hit on the notion that just because something is dirty doesn't mean you should throw it away. To illustrate the point, it drew on intentionally absurd comparisons, including throwing away a perfectly good bike or set of dinner plates. A follow-up campaign included several quirky cleaning tutorial videos on social media.

Other clients include Nature's Fare Markets, Canterbury Coffee, electrical products manufacturer VoltSafe, beer maker Brewing August, Wesgroup Properties, Denny's Canada, the Vancouver Aquarium, and auto and motorcycle insurance agency SnapQuote.

Here Be Monsters is keen on creating solutions with just the right balance of the familiar present and a future as unknowable as the uncharted waters of those 16th-century maps. Too much future can inspire fear of the unknown, while too much present may not be enough to propel a brand forward. But Here Be Monsters knows how to navigate these waters, taking brands to better places.



CONTACT:

Chris Raedcher (he/him)

Client Services Director, Partner

chris@herebemonsters.ca



TOP: To demonstrate similarities to cleaning – in other words, recycling – in motor oil, HBM created a DIY YouTube tutorial series providing tips on cleaning your home and your stuff.

BOTTOM: Inspired by athletic markings and race lanes, HBM rebranded GUD recovery drinks to be more inclusive and joyful, whereas the previous brand was dark and overly masculine.



TOP: Animal facts written in a fun, typographic way and an arresting photo are all HBM needed to promote the exhibit *Where Weird Is Normal*.

BOTTOM: Elastic Studios is a double-large facility that can be partitioned off for separate projects to meet the needs of any production. HBM came up with the studio's name and identity system.



An agency beyond borders

East Coast contender m5 brings brand-building punch to the world



As border closures caused by the pandemic meant Tourism Nova Scotia's most important audience became Nova Scotians, m5 developed a powerful staycation campaign that reminded residents there's no place like home.

THE EAST COAST HAS LONG BEEN a top talent-generator. So no one should be surprised when an agency like m5 steps into the light. But as agency partner Heather Dalton notes, m5 doesn't shout about it; it lets the work speak for itself. And now it's attracting clients across the continent.

"Our roots are deep in this part of Canada, and we've been quietly doing national and international work here for years," Dalton says. She adds that the agency is the largest in Atlantic Canada with offices in Halifax, Moncton, St. John's, and a recent acquisition in Saint John. With more than 140 employees, it has grown to be one of Canada's biggest independents.

Dalton, Susan Clarke, Rick Rouah and Chris MacInnes acquired m5 in a 2018 management buyout. They see the new ownership as an inflection point for a bold stance and an even bolder investment in the future. "We are building off a strong foundation. And with recent wins, there's more momentum to continue to attract top talent and further develop our team."

m5 has become a regional powerhouse through organic growth and acquisitions. It is an integrated, full-service agency that handles everything from creative and media to digital and strategy. It also boasts affiliate companies m5 Public Affairs, MQO Research, Group ATN Consulting and Wavelight Productions.

"We believe real creativity is about going beyond the surface to help solve our clients' big, tangly problems," Dalton says.

"All the services you'd expect are here, but the reach goes even further. The one thing you won't find is pretension. That just doesn't fit our East Coast roots."

m5 has put new ECD hire Damian Bonse at the helm of the agency's creative work. Bonse brings more than 24 years of award-winning experience at TBWA, BBDO, and FCB. Dalton says he was brought in to evolve the agency's creative product – to mastermind bold creative built for today's consumers. "Damian is a big part of our growth strategy," she says.

Bonse says that when he was looking to move to Canada from South Africa, he assumed it would be Toronto or Vancouver. "But as I got to know m5, I could see the potential energy of the place. They were building and that kind of growth is the opportunity to do great work on interesting brands."

He was especially excited to jump into m5's newest client, U.S.-based True Temper Hockey. m5 landed the win during the pandemic, bringing its unique point of view to the hockey brand's global marketing strategy. The agency hit the ground running with True, launching its new Catalyst hockey-stick line last July followed by the busy Back to Hockey and holiday programs.

"I am very excited for what we have in

the works for True for 2022," Bonse says.

Bonse is also looking forward to what the agency has planned for Tourism Nova Scotia when travel comes back post-pandemic. m5 has worked with the TNS team to come up with the best approaches to confront the challenge of COVID-19, quickly shifting to a strategy focusing on in-province staycations. "Nova Scotia is simply beautiful," Bonse says. "The opportunity to bring this place to global markets was another element that attracted me to m5."

The agency has run campaigns on every continent excluding Australia and Antarctica, recognizing an increased need for international expertise. Its diverse client roster includes GM, Fortis, NB Power and Newfoundland Power. The agency also does significant work for post-secondary institutions on both sides of the border and most recently is working with Halifax's Dalhousie University.

Having a bilingual team in New Brunswick has enabled m5 to do work in Quebec for national clients and federal government departments including Veterans Affairs, National Defence, Agriculture and Agri-Food, and Natural Resources.

Dalton sees m5 continuing in growth mode. "The word is out there that we have the team, talent and client experience needed," she says. "But there's something more. Our East-Coast-ness means we over-deliver on the expectations in the most unpretentious way. That's just how we do things here."



m5's campaign for Eastlink demonstrates the tangible ways the telecom delivers on its promise to make things simpler for customers.



A key aspect of True Temper Hockey's growth has been its partnerships with NHL players including Mitch Marner for the launch of its Catalyst hockey-stick line.



Can a Christmas tree create a holiday miracle? It can when it's a Nova Scotia balsam fir. m5 created a new brand platform to support planned international diversification for the Christmas Tree Association of Nova Scotia.



The "Invest in Our Kids" campaign makes the case for smaller class sizes to improve educational outcomes and children's mental health. The child's mask represents the struggles that go unseen in crowded classrooms.



An investor relations video for Fortis showcases the geographic range of the utility company's operations and the variety of its infrastructure.



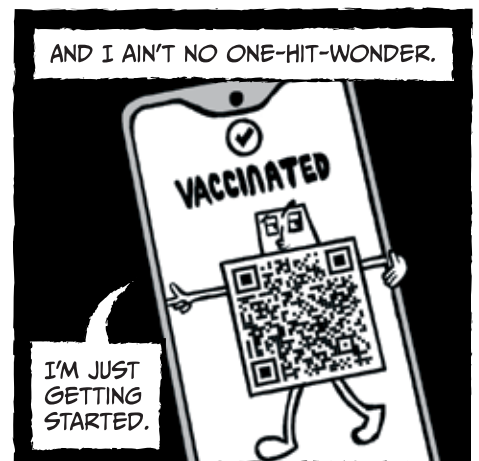
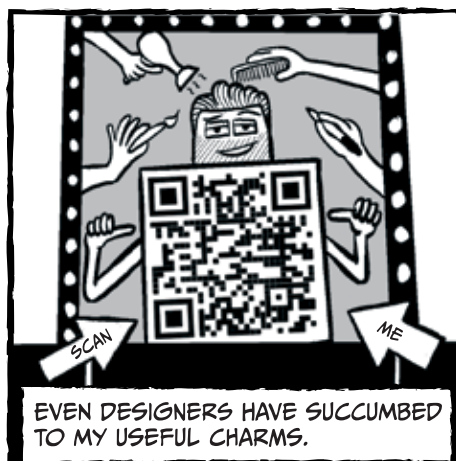
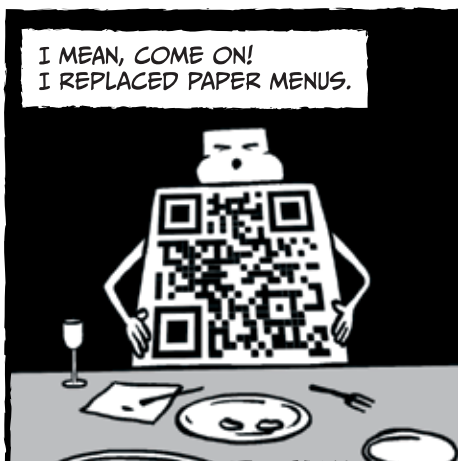
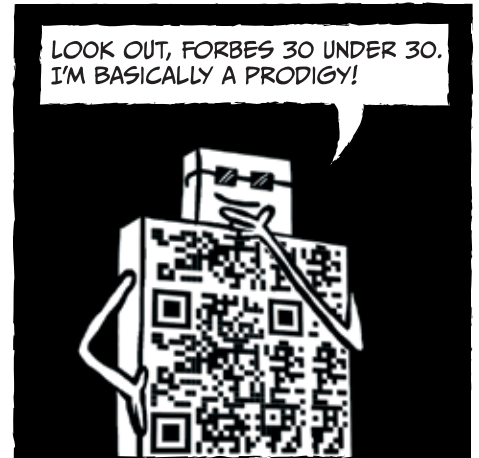
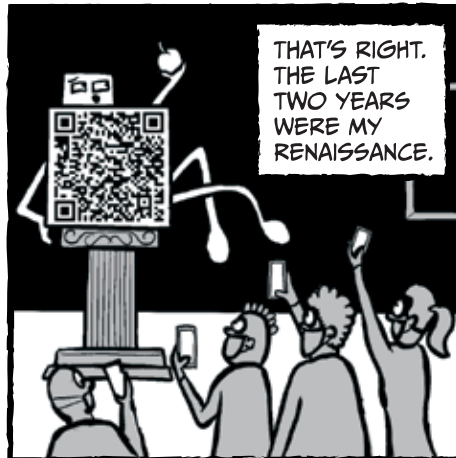
For the latest takeCHARGE campaign for Newfoundland Power and Newfoundland Hydro, m5 shows homeowners how good it feels to save energy and money by living with greater energy efficiency. A TV spot was augmented with social posts.



CONTACT:
Heather Dalton
 Partner
heather@m5.ca

ADVENTURES OF QR

THE COMEBACK CODE



A COMIC BY PS&CO

Go beyond your network.

Tap into *strategy's* dedicated marketing, media and creative audience to find your next star hire.

strategyonline.ca/careers



WE'VE BEEN AROUND SO LONG,

_____ our first annual cost 15 cents.

_____ we've awarded more jingles than we'd care to admit.

_____ we didn't used to have a best TV category because TVs didn't exist.

_____ augmented reality was what happened after three drinks.

_____ one time judging took four weeks because every entry was long copy.

_____ we only used to award headlines if they were puns.

_____ spamming someone used to mean to give them canned meat.

_____ the Photoshop 'burn tool' used to be a box of matches.

_____ we can still smell all the paste glue that was used to mount entries.

_____ we used to award best coupon.

_____ our 1922 winners included the launch campaign for the front-lacing corset.