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## AFRAID OF PAINTING YOUR BRAND INTO A CORNER?

How marketers  
can promote eco  
efforts, while  
avoiding the  
harms of  
greenwashing

*(Hint: "radical"  
transparency is  
the new normal)*



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We celebrated a triumphant return to in-person events at the 100th Marketing Awards. The evening saw the best and brightest recognized for their industry contributions this year.

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#### ON THE COVER:

We get it. Leaders want and/or feel the pressure to take a stand and shake up the corporate world's eco misdealings. But making gallant promises you cannot keep will only paint you awkwardly into a corner. In our cover feature, captured by **Brendan Stephens**, we highlight greenwashing lessons (hopefully) learned by giants in years past. Then, we explore realistic, practical ways to be a change agent, and how to take steps that actually stick – such as telling the truth, no matter how ugly. Seems obvious, but you'd be surprised by how many marketing do-gooders mislead consumers without even realizing it. The public is catching on and the next green wave is coming. Are you ready to paint inside the lines?

## EDITOR'S NOTE

# Enough is not good enough

I can't even count on *two* hands how many zero-waste laundry detergents are in the world. You know which ones I'm talking about? Those sticky-and-dissolvable-when-wet strips that come in compact paper envelopes? There's about 15 (that I'm aware of). I'm also hard-pressed to count on *one* hand how many major household brands have nailed biodegradable packaging options. The best I can find is Tide's "eco box," which is still a honking cardboard container ten times the size of eco-strip packaging. Clearly an alternative to plastic exists. Yet I'm stuck here scratching my head wondering why I keep seeing big brands trumpet promises to offer 100% recyclable (not even already post-consumer recycled!) plastic packaging by far-off dates like 2030. Maybe I'm missing something, but it boggles my mind that companies are still talking about stopgap measures like these. Tepid solutions that do little to slow/stop impending climate doom.

I'm not alone. There are plenty of us anxious worrywarts turned off by the not-good-enough promises made by corporate giants. Consumers are growing ever-wary of inflated green claims. But thankfully, as you'll read in our cover feature, some brands are becoming courageous enough to call BS on the industry's fixation on eco commitments that don't hold water. Some profit-driven players are admitting that what they and their industry peers are doing to curb carbon creation is not enough. Naked, undisguised and apologetic admissions. A vow not simply to do *something*, but to do *better*, even if it means tripping-up in the public eye along the way. That's what gets my vote as a consumer.

So, number one, brands need to acknowledge that enough is not good enough if they want to avoid critique. In a similar vein, another approach (posed by our experts in the feature) is to be "radically" transparent about a brand's actual, factual, tactical progress. It's probably a given to warn marketers of not misleading consumers with what *Wired* calls "creative carbon accounting," where brands hide having a stake in a dirty coal mine, for example, in their green targets. As the external voice of a company, it's imperative that marketers illuminate themselves of the true impact of their brands. In the end, that's how you remove the paralyzing fear of speaking out of place. So start educating yourself now, not by some far-off date.

*Exciting side note: I'll be moving closer to nature in the countryside where all this save-the-planet talk will be even more top-of-mind. Especially as I welcome my first-born into the world. I'll be back in a year, excited to hear about the genuine progress the industry has made. See you soon!*

Jennifer Horn  
Content Director & Editor, *strategy*

IT BOGGLES  
MY MIND THAT  
COMPANIES ARE  
STILL TALKING  
ABOUT STOPGAP  
MEASURES...  
TEPID SOLUTIONS  
THAT DO LITTLE  
TO SLOW/STOP  
IMPENDING  
CLIMATE DOOM.

# strategy

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INT. ELEVATOR - AFTERNOON

In the hall of a Bay Street high-rise, elevator doors close on the motley crew of creative agency principals that is PAQUIN, FIERMAN, PODOLSKY and BRINKLEY.

PAQUIN

Not a word until we get to the car.

FIERMAN starts to speak, then resists, lips curling into a silent smile.

PODOLSKY

Great lunch spot two blocks up.  
Anyone hungry?

They all mutter ambivalence as BRINKLEY pushes through the boys and hits "G", realizing that yes, in fact, she does have to do everything.

INT. BOARD ROOM - SAME TIME

Flanked by art that could be real and overlooking a view of Toronto that could be CGI, a projection screen shows the final "thank you" slide of a Zerotrillion presentation. Five CLIENTS sit in quiet contemplation around the table. Bodies like Greek gods, minds like Greek philosophers and most likely a marketing budget like a small Greek restaurant. CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER is the first to speak.

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Who the hell found Zerotrillion?  
Stacey? Jackson? Which one of you?

JACKSON

I did, ma'am.

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER sighs deeply and looks down at the Zerotrillion-branded Yeti mug that sits in front of each of them as a small bribe.

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

Pack your desk. And do it quickly.

JACKSON

Ma'am?

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

You're moving to the corner office  
upstairs.

(BASED ON A TRUE STORY IF YOU WANT: ZEROTRILLION.COM)





## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

# A culture of collaboration = a thriving ad industry

After a two-year hiatus, *strategy* returned to live events in June. During all the hustle and bustle, we found that connection and collaboration are the essential drivers for normalcy in the industry. While grateful for the technology that (almost) seamlessly carried the globe for the last two years, it's become apparent that creativity thrives in real life.

As businesses experience a mass exodus of talent, doubling-down on building a strong, meaningful company culture seems like the prudent thing to do. We're seeing marketers grapple with attracting new consumers, as well as talent. And they're responding with creative tactics that speak to both. For example, McDonald's reached out to potential employees with *Crush the Rush* (pg. 29), a mass awareness/recruitment campaign that gave virtual-life-like examples of what it's like to work at the QSR. The blended strategy aimed to showcase its creative culture to both consumers and candidates alike.

Agencies are also doing things differently. Again, in our annual sponsored supplement, the Agency A List (pg. 33), the common thread is collaboration. We're seeing better work when silos come down and when we put our heads together to get to the same goal without the "us vs. them" mentality. For instance, UM is future-proofing not only its business, but also its people via

Better U. Agency 123w's focus on creating a "one team, one dream" mentality is also an example of unified collaboration.

All of these efforts are helping to take Canada to the world stage. Our creativity is showing up across markets, and it's a positive thing. Earlier this month we asked CCOs, CMOs and CSOs to participate in a roundtable discussion (pg. 22) and dive in to what makes the Canadian advertising industry a super power. Their answer? Our creative chops thrive when we're open to (you guessed it) collaboration, producing work that not only makes a difference, but also moves the needle. As FCB's Nancy Crimi-Lamanna points out: "We're really good at solving the hard stuff." Some of the work coming out of Canada not only sheds light on societal and eco issues, but it also shows the steps consumers can take to bring about real change. For example, IKEA and Rethink's "ScrapsBook" drove the retailer's sustainability messaging, and also offered ways to reduce food waste through recipes.

What we continue to hear from leaders as we head into the – dare I say – new "new normal," is that connecting teams and building culture remains at the forefront of a hybrid world. While we can't provide the industry with an overnight fix, we have been working behind-the-scenes to build out the year with an IRL calendar so that

teams can connect in person again, while seeing the latest industry trends and checking out award-winning work.

Kicking things off, our Marketing Evolution Summit (MES) is taking place on September 29, where we'll be looking at redefining the role of marketing as leaders continue to future-proof their brands – since everything has changed, again.

Then, the Strategy Awards will recognize the role strategic insights play alongside creative ideas. We'll be announcing the shortlist for that program later this summer, so stay tuned. Agency of the Year (AOY) is also returning to its home at Koerner Hall on November 1, and the Media Innovation Awards (MIAs) gala is set to celebrate impactful media plans and insights the first week of December, back at the Carlu. This year, the entry process for recognizing the Media Leader of the Year will head back to nominations, so when we launch the program please share who you think is setting the bar, and then some. The rest of the MIAs program will remain open for entries until August 15th.

While we continue to move forward with new plans, we want to hear from you. So let us know if you want to see new coverage areas, and what else is keeping you up at night.

Until then, cheers.

Lisa Faktor, publisher, *strategy*

OUR CREATIVE  
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NEEDLE.



# Celebrating the 2022 Canadian Cannes Lions Jurors

The Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity is the largest gathering in the creative community and where the Cannes Lions Awards are announced. I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to the Canadians who have been named to the 2022 Cannes Lions juries.

As the most recognized and prestigious marketing and advertising awards in the world, the selection of these jurors once again recognizes the world class expertise in the Canadian marketplace. On behalf of the Canadian advertising industry, congratulations to the leaders named to this year's Cannes Lions Awarding and Shortlist Juries.



*C. J. Saunders*

**Andrew Saunders**

Chief Revenue Officer, The Globe and Mail  
Chair, Canadian Cannes Lions Advisory Board

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The Canadian Cannes Advisory Board is a steering committee that provides strategic insights and supports the Cannes Lions mission in the Canadian marketplace. Comprised of leaders across media, marketing and industry, the Board's objective is to champion the value of creativity and amplify Canadian talent and work on the global stage. A special thank you for their expertise and dedication.



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President, CMDC



**Mary Maddever**  
EVP, Canadian Media Brands  
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Brunico Communications

## CANNES LIONS AWARDING JURY



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Data Lions**

**Josh Budd,**  
Chief Creative  
Officer NA,  
Citizen Relations



**Film Lions**

**Nancy Crimi-Lamanna,**  
Chief Creative Officer,  
FCB Canada

## CANNES LIONS SHORTLIST JURY



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**Ari Elkouby,**  
Chief Creative Officer,  
Wunderman Thompson  
Canada



**Film Craft Lions**

**Alison Gordon,**  
Co-Founder/Editor,  
Outsider Editorial Inc



**Design Lions**

**Claire Dawson,**  
Co-Founder and Creative  
Director, Underline Studio



**Health &  
Wellness Lions**

**Max Geraldo,**  
Chief Creative Officer,  
BBDO Canada



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PR Lions**

**Judy John,**  
Global Chief Creative  
Officer, Edelman



**Brand Experience &  
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## WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT TWITCH, ANYWAY?

By Patti Summerfield

**A**s the shift from cable to streaming continues, advertisers are exploring other digital channels to reach consumers. One of those is Twitch. Once considered the territory of young gamers, the platform now attracts a wider tech-savvy demo of all ages and those with a higher-than-average household income.

**Above:** Twitch is more than just watching a live-streamed game. The intimate connections streamers have with users is why BMO chose to be one of the first banks to set up a branded channel.

Just in the last few months, big brands such as BMO, KD, Taco Bell and Shaw have staged campaigns on Twitch. BMO, in particular, has gone all-in with a dedicated Twitch channel called NXT LVL – a place for the bank to educate users about personal finances through live gaming. Personal banker Sean Frame was chosen to host the channel, taking on the title gaming relations specialist (GRS), where he helps gamers “level up in-game and IRL.”

Maja Neable, CMO for banking, as well as the chief data and analytics officer at BMO, says the bank wanted to show users how to become an expert in managing finances just as they can learn how to become an expert in a game. Neable says Twitch enables it to connect with 17.5 million engaged viewers on a daily basis – an audience that consists of early adopters who like to be the first to try new products and services.

“Twitch isn’t just a place where people play games, it goes far beyond that,” says Neable. “The reality is that often the game being played isn’t even that important. It’s about the entertainment that comes through a streamer’s personality, the engagement between the streamer and the live chat, and the various communities and sub-cultures that are naturally formed across streams.”

Because Twitch is all about live-streaming content, BMO can address financial questions gamers may have in real-time, and in a way that feels authentic to the brand. “Our customers tell us that when they engage with our employees in our branches, they have a great experience. We found that this is a way to bring that humanity of BMO from our branches into the gaming space, so they can experience it in the channels where they are.”

For BMO, the results of the Twitch channel have been better than anticipated. “We’ve become a part of gaming culture and reimagined where and how people engage with a bank,” says Neable. “We reached over one million unique views across the first three streams [since its launch in June], placing us at the top-end of the industry benchmark.”

## THE NEXT CATEGORY INTERRUPTUS

By Will Novosedlik

There’s a thriving market at the intersection of prevention and pleasure. Sexual pleasure, that is.

In 2021, the global condom market was worth U.S. \$9.9 billion. Grandview Research says its expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 8.52% from 2022 to 2030. What’s more, the adult sex toy market is three-and-a-half times the size of the condom market, having reached \$37 billion in 2021, according to Statista.

While the condom category has historically been soaked in hypermasculine brands, there appears to be a wave of newer, hipper brands looking to disrupt the model by aligning with health and wellness instead. For instance, Jems – created by Toronto design shop Whitman Emorson – has made sexual wellness, safer sex and all-natural ingredients the focus of its value proposition.

One of Jems’ co-founders, Whitney Geller, tells *strategy* about her experience in the condom aisle, which ultimately led to the decision to create a brand that is “made for a multiplicity of sex and gender expressions.” She recalls the aisle looking like it hadn’t changed for 50 years. “There were names like Trojan and Magnum, and it was all black silk sheets and nude male torsos.” To get beyond the “all male” focus, Jems sports taglines like “Jems for all” and “Come one, come all.”

“Condoms are traditionally sold in an embarrassing aisle and an embarrassing box. You want to store it away in your drawer unseen,” adds Geller. “So we created these beautiful point-of-purchase displays for bars and coffee shops and hotels. We’re doing partnerships with college campuses, all to normalize the idea of carrying condoms and making it something that you’re proud to have out instead of hidden away.”

Then there’s Naughty Bags, very specifically aimed at the teen market in Milwaukee, U.S. Created by agency Cramer-Krasselt and non-profit Diverse & Resilient,



**Above:** Jems goes against the category grain with stylish gender-neutral packaging. **Right, top & bottom:** Naughty Bags and Replens is squashing sexual taboos and promoting a healthy sex life.



the brand makes its products available for free in Milwaukee neighborhoods with high teen pregnancy rates – typically three times that of the national average. Like Jems, Naughty Bags is focused on sexual health and safe sexual choices, with cheeky packaging that goes against the category norm.

If the condom market is vibrant, the sex toy segment is positively exuberant. According to Statista, some 65% of female consumers own some kind of sex toy. Vibrators are the most popular. You can even pick one up in your local Indigo store.

Sex toys, like everything else, have been appified. Are you ready for “teledildonics”? That’s right. It’s a vibrator that can be activated remotely by a mobile phone. OhMiBod, a U.S.

pioneer of wireless erotica, goes one step further and combines it with the ability to stream music while you vibrate. Apparently 9% of British women already have vibrators connected to their smartphones.

Which brings us to the final

frontier: Senior sex. The after-60 demographic is more beset by sexual taboos than any other group. Not that they care. In a 2010 study by AARP, 28% of older adults had sexual intercourse at least once a week; 85% of men and 61% of women agreed sex is important to their quality of life. For older women, the most common barrier to enjoyment is vaginal dryness.

Church and Dwight’s Replens brand of vaginal moisturizer recently kicked off its “Sex Never Gets Old”

campaign, challenging both the taboo of senior sex, as well as the clinical functionality of most medical communications by using images of closeness between diverse older couples.

(It’s important to note that normalization has been aided by shows such as the recent Netflix series *Grace and Frankie*, wherein the main characters designed a seniors’ sex toy called the “Ménage à Moi.”)

As the numbers and new disruptive brand entrants attest, there’s a lot of room left for growth as sexuality continues to shed its taboos to embrace a healthier, more positive role in the lives of consumers.

## TALES OF A GEN Z SHOPPER

*Strategy* looks at three priorities that are driving this generation’s purchase and brand decisions, according to WGSN. By Will Novosedlik



### METaverse

As the concept extends beyond gaming, luxury retailers are exploring ways to connect with Gen Z in virtual reality. Some luxury brands are moving away from human influencers and experimenting with digital personalities called “synthfluencers.” WGSN predicts that these synthetic humans will gain more traction as the lines between virtual and real continue to blur. As an example, Dior debuted a 2021 collection at Shanghai Fashion Week in collaboration with synthfluencer Angela 3.0, a digital impression of Chinese celebrity Angelababy. Angela 3.0 modeled the collection for 90,000 drop-in fans via Weibo. WGSN advises brands use synth-humans to position shopping opportunities as virtual experiences, with tiered ticketing, ballots and timeslots, providing new ways for consumers to explore products.

### E-COMMERCE

For Gen Zers, commerce is social. A study by Sprout Social noted that 43% of U.S. Gen Zers purchased via social platforms in 2021. In response to the popular hashtag #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt (which has been used billions of times), TikTok launched a platform

for retailers and brands so that product bundles can be purchased directly via TikTok. Gen Zers also tend to rely on the opinions of their peers and favourite influencers to make brand decisions. To convert “likes” to purchases, WGSN advises brands focus on community-building, creating original content, embracing authenticity and leaning into TikTok’s shoot-from-the-hip aesthetic.

### SUSTAINABILITY

Climate concerns colour every aspect of the Gen Zer’s life, and they’re not afraid to tell us about it. A 2021 Lancet study found that 60% of the cohort are extremely worried about climate change, and 45% say these feelings are with them all the time. As a result, Gen Z is “flocking” to careers that are focused on fighting climate change, says WGSN. In the U.S., 70% said they are more likely to shop sustainable products. At the same time, they feel completely ignored by corporations. The report advises brands to proactively go “above and beyond” by lobbying for greater change at the top and adopting measurable and transparent initiatives committed to sustainable, systemic change.



**Left:** Lowe's "Make Yourself Failproof" OOH and social recruitment campaign featured examples of home reno failures that could have been avoided if only it had the right job applicant.



**INSTEAD OF RUNNING A JOB FAIR,** Lowe's recruiters arrived at three Canadian cities earlier this year with examples of ways an applicant could trash a home reno job.

Splattering white paint across a closet full of clothes or installing a toilet seat upside down are definitely mistakes candidates need to avoid on-the-job. But the "Make Yourself Failproof" OOH and social media campaign, created by Sid Lee, also showed just how valuable home reno skills are to employees – and, more importantly, it helped the brand stand out amid a brutally tight labour market.

"A lot of recruitment campaigns have a corporate tone," says Jacynthe Prince, director of brand engagement at Lowe's Canada. "They talk to people's heads rather than their hearts. If you want to convince an 18-year-old to apply for a summer job at Lowe's, or at Rona, or at Réno-Dépôt, you need to talk to their heart first."

In March, Statistics Canada data showed employers were trying to fill a record one million vacant jobs. Doing so required more than a LinkedIn or Indeed job posting. Instead, several companies like Lowe's, McDonald's and even government arms found interactive methods like the aforementioned reno failure art, video games and Twitch streams to promote their workplace culture.

"One way to grab people's attention and wake people up is to do things differently," says Kristy Pleckaitis, VP of strategy at Broken Heart Love Affair. "[These brands are] thinking about [attention-grabbing] consumer marketing tactics and applying them to recruitment campaigns."

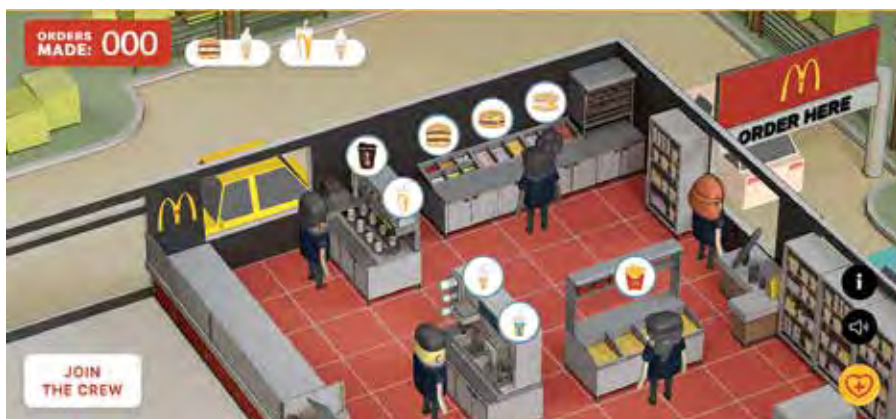
Pleckaitis points out that using consumer marketing tactics for recruitment isn't new, particularly for brands like McDonald's. For its "Snapplications" event in 2019, the QSR asked Snapchat users to submit 30-second videos to its hiring portal rather than old-

# WHEN MARKETING MEETS HR

HOW BRANDS LIKE LOWE'S, MCDONALD'S AND STAPLES ARE USING CREATIVE PROMOTIONAL TACTICS TO RECRUIT IN TODAY'S TIGHT LABOUR MARKET.

BY BRENNAN DOHERTY





**Above:** McDonald's looked to attract employees by way of a video game that showed the hustle and bustle of the job. **Left:** The Quebec government recently discussed job openings via Twitch influencers. **Below:** Staples targeted young Canadians, immigrants and retirees in a recent hiring spree.

fashioned cover letter-resume combos. Then came Cossette's award-winning "Friends Wanted" campaign, which invited applicants to apply alongside their pals, with the goal to paint a picture of the company as "modern and progressive" in its hiring practices.

Applying a compelling consumer lens to ordinarily flat corporate marketing has worked well in the past, and is picking up steam amongst retailers and QSRs again.

Continuing its unconventional hiring practice, McDonald's launched a video game developed with Verizon called *Crush the Rush Crew* in May that simulated the action of a busy drive-thru team. Rebecca Smart, marketing director of brand strategy at the QSR, says it was specifically designed to grab the attention of young applicants (although it is open to applicants of any age) – about 70% of McDonald's restaurant crews are between the ages of 16 and 24.

"While a general job description may help applicants imagine what a job could look like at a McDonald's restaurant, we know games are a fun way to engage our target audience, and *Crush the Rush Crew* offered potential applicants a unique way



to get a feel for the hustle and bustle of the job," Smart wrote to *strategy*.

While McDonald's Canada didn't offer specifics on how successful *Crush the Rush Crew* was in meeting the company's hiring goal of 25,000 new employees by August, Smart says it saw a "substantial number of direct drives to our hiring website."

Beyond major commercial brands, even the Quebec government has rethought its hiring tactics. Earlier this year, the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS), alongside Cossette, convinced Twitch streamers to hand over their channels to IT, construction and civil engineering experts. The result was a campaign where applicants learned about those specific careers through familiar games such as *Minecraft* and *Cities: Skyline*.

Creative recruitment campaigns do more than just act as walkthroughs for particular jobs or skillsets. "It provides brands an opportunity to communicate not only to potential employees, but also consumers [about] what their values are and the type of people they are looking to bring in," Pleckaitis says. "It communicates something about the company itself."

Three years ago, Staples Canada was going through what Daniella van Wernigh, senior director of learning and talent at the brand, calls a transition from its reputation as simply an office supply company to its current tagline, "The Working and Learning Company."

Van Wernigh says, "We knew with that

transformation that we would also need to attract talent. So, how do we want to go to market? What's our story?" As a result of that thinking, Staples created a hiring campaign that targets three specific demographics in an effort to fill over 1,000 jobs nationwide: young Canadians, landed immigrants looking for jobs and retirees who want to work. Like any good marketing campaign, Van Wernigh says Staples is reaching each group through age-specific social media channels like TikTok and Facebook.

Staples is also starting to use brand influencers at all levels of the company to attract applicants. "These are people who work for us," says Van Wernigh. "They live our values; they're high performers. And they love working at Staples."

These types of recruitment tactics are not likely to disappear if/when the tight job market begins to loosen. Pleckaitis says companies will always need employees, and consumer marketing tactics can show candidates just how much a brand is willing to invest in them.

"It's all going to bode well for the brand at the end of the day," she says. "So I don't see it stopping. I think there will always be a need for companies to reach out and bring people in." 📌



# ARE BRANDS DOING ENOUGH?



MARKETERS ARE UNDER PRESSURE TO TAKE ACTION IN THE AGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE. BUT IS THEIR MARCOM HELPING OR HARMING THE ISSUE? TO REVERSE THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY GREENWASHING, THERE NEEDS TO BE SUSTAINED AND UNITED INDUSTRY COMMITMENT. HERE'S HOW SOME BRANDS ARE SHOWING A GENUINE DESIRE TO MAKE AN IMPACT, EVEN IF IT MEANS BEING PAINFULLY TRANSPARENT ABOUT THE HURDLES THAT EXIST.

BY **WILL NOVOSEDLIK**

Back in 2002, John Browne, then-CEO of British Petroleum (BP), gave a speech at Stanford University in which he said, "We have to reinvent the energy business. We have to go beyond petroleum."

To deliver the message of its commitment to transition away from oil production, which at the time still accounted for 98% of its revenues, BP revealed a new visual identity – a green sunburst – as well as new gas station designs and an ad

campaign that dealt with the public's skepticism head on.

In the ads, individuals expressed their disbelief that BP was going to be able to live up to its promise, and the company responded with versions of its grand ambition. It was a clever campaign because, by anticipating consumers' objections, BP conveyed the impression that it was being honest with itself.

Then 2006 happened: A burst BP pipeline resulted in one of the largest oil spills in Alaska's history. If that wasn't enough of a blow to the brand, along came the Deepwater Horizon explosion in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010, which unleashed the largest marine oil spill in history. Under pressure from shareholders, BP began selling off its solar and wind assets. The rebrand was subsequently abandoned.

It is perhaps the most infamous case of greenwashing in history. But most importantly, it shone a bright light on the sometimes yawning gap between what a brand *says* and what it *does* to live up to its promise. It's the ultimate lesson on why you shouldn't paint your brand into a corner.

## THE DANGERS OF GREENWASHING

In April 2022, Forrester released an enlightening study that revealed greenwashing is growing, not diminishing, and that "even mature marketers and leading communications experts can unintentionally mislead consumers."

The study quotes Thomas Prouty, founder and CEO of MIEUX (a CSR agency), who believes many brand leaders are greenwashing without even knowing it: "Greenwashing is

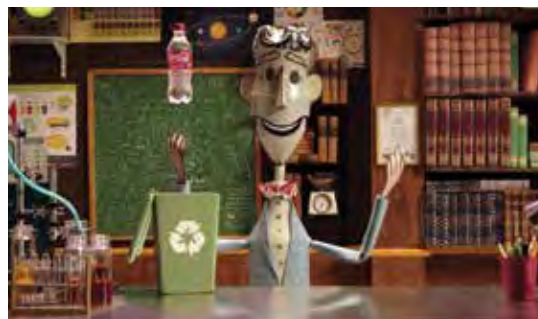
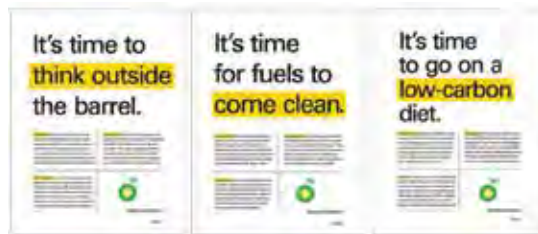
the result of internal miscommunication between pushy marketers, who prefer the talk, and humble sustainability champions, who prefer the walk."

There has also been a lack of authoritative guidance. Where does a marketer look for advice? The Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) is currently developing a framework, which it says will be released in the coming months. Ad Standards refers advertisers to the Canadian Code of Advertising Standards, which then punts them to the Competition Bureau and, where relevant, the International Chamber of Commerce Framework for Responsible Environmental Marketing Communications, a comprehensive 40-page document that was only just released in November 2021.

Many brands are at various stages of their green journey today. Some are going to great lengths to be seen as eco stewards with some pushback along the way, and some have a genuine interest and are making strides. The question is, are they doing (or able to do) enough?

The reality is that companies are now more at risk of being criticized for trumpeting green actions that distract from real progress that needs to be made – such as when Coca-Cola promotes recycling of its plastic bottles instead of focusing on developing solutions for consumers to reuse and refill its bottles.

As "green" brands grow, so too does consumer mistrust. Public scrutiny is becoming more real, as eco claims become increasingly misleading. So how can well-meaning brands frame the issue in a way that doesn't pull the wool over consumers' eyes and do more harm than good?



Above: BP and Coke have been criticized for making false promises or promoting stopgap measures to help the environment.

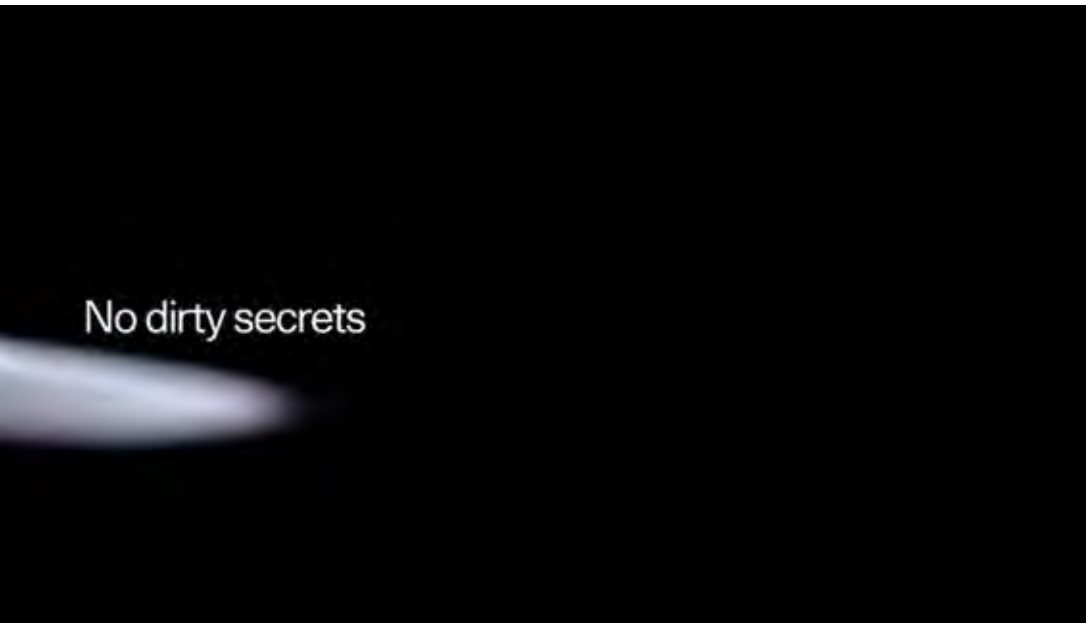
## (RADICAL) HONESTY IS THE INDUSTRY'S BEST POLICY

There are ways to avoid promoting stopgap measures – going back to the recycling example – that dilute the real issue at hand (i.e. plastic pollution) and end up in consumer backlash. One of them is radical transparency.

Electric vehicle co. Polestar has been forthright about the false promises made by the EV industry – a risky move considering its business operates within the category. Its CEO Thomas Ingenlath has openly stated that "electric cars are not clean." Instead of "cliché-ing its way to a cleaner planet," the CEO recognizes that his company is a part of the problem and is attempting to start a movement that encourages the industry to look for more environmentally friendly alternatives to electric – acknowledging that it's only incrementally better than gas.

"Now is a crucial time for the electric vehicle industry to learn the lessons of the past," Ingenlath wrote in a column for the *Telegraph*. "We all face issues linked to our manufacturing systems, as well as our supply chain. The materials we use can also be problematic. There is no such thing as a clean car today, and telling consumers that there is, is immoral... So where do we go from here? First we must tell the truth."

Polestar attempts to show a genuine desire to be a change agent by not only avoiding inflated claims, but also being transparent about the hurdles that exist. In a recent Forsman & Bodenfors commercial that aired during the 2022 SuperBowl, the brand proclaimed it has "no dirty secrets," "no hidden agenda," "no hidden promises"



No dirty secrets

**Left:** Brutal honesty about its environmental impact, good or bad, is how Polestar addresses sustainability; Kevin Murphy had the courage to admit its failings after not being able to recycle ocean plastic; Parkland faces navigating the green paradox.

and that “no compromises” will be made to achieve its goal of creating a climate-neutral car. It is also the only auto brand to make its Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) publicly available – with Polestar displaying its rating inside stores and online when people make a purchase – and has called on the rest of the industry to do the same.

Radical transparency also means not being afraid to admit failure when an ambitious goal can’t be achieved. In 2018, haircare brand Kevin Murphy made a never-been-done-before commitment to only use ocean plastic in its packaging. However, after two years of research, the company found recycling the plastic couldn’t be done the way it intended. Instead of taking half measures to save face, Kevin Murphy recanted the promise and went back to the drawing board.

“The harsh realities are forcing Kevin Murphy to accept the fact that this task is difficult to uphold and sustain,” wrote CEO Laurent Misischi. “There are a whole host of issues along the supply chain... We can humbly say we now understand the reason it hadn’t been done before... At this juncture our ethics and morality dictate that we communicate this reality in a timely and transparent manner.”

Providing another example, Phillip Haid, CEO and co-founder of social impact agency



and accelerator Public, says fashion brand Everlane built its entire brand proposition, from the very beginning, around radical transparency: “They said, ‘Look, we’re going to tell you not only how our clothes get made, where they get made, what we pay people at the factories and how the factories operate; but we’re also going to show you the breakdown of all the costs.’”

### HOW TO NAVIGATE THE GREEN PARADOX

Brands that make contradictory claims are subject to the most extreme scrutiny. Take RBC, for example, which has been in the news recently because of criticism from environmental groups for its so-called climate blueprint, where it has an executive-led working group committed to helping the company reach net-zero emissions in its lending by 2050 (in line with the Paris Climate Agreement).

But here’s the problem: It’s also a major lender and investor in fossil fuel expansion. Since 2016, RBC has invested more than \$262 billion in fossil fuel projects. But if you go to RBC’s Capital Markets website, you see a headline that reads “Protecting the Environment,” set against a photo of a forest and RBC employees cleaning up beaches as part of its Blue Water Project. As a result, climate activists have filed a complaint with the Competition Bureau to investigate the misleading claims RBC has put in its advertising. The bank denies any wrongdoing.

Parkland is another example of a company that is susceptible to the green paradox. It’s a brand that most Canadians use

## A GUIDE TO SUSTAINABILITY COMMUNICATIONS

A lot more brands are frightened of greenwashing these days, says Ryan Skinner, co-author of a recent Forrester report. “They don’t want to go out into the market, set their foot wrong and have a big scandal blow up in their faces. They’re afraid of blowback on the brand getting to the Board, which is very concerned about reputational risk, but [is also] pushing at a high level for the brand and the business to become more sustainable.”

Some obstacles can generate paralysis on the part of marketers. The expectations for them to get it “right” adds an extra layer to how they’re used to working. Brand leaders’ days are filled with activities related directly to getting products and services to market. Now they’re expected to make decisions around other considerations when it comes to sustainability comms.

“So, on the one hand,” says Skinner, “they’re scared of making a mistake that could land them in hot water, but on the other, they’re terrified by the list of considerations and saying, ‘How am I going to do all this?’”

While marketers may not control operations or product decisions, they are responsible for stakeholder expectations when creating marketing messages. Forrester proposes “key perspectives” in which marketers can safeguard their sustainability communications.

**CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITY INSIGHTS:** Understand which of your customers really care, trust your efforts and are ready to critique your brand if you miscommunicate. Develop listening programs around communities, leveraging machine learning to analyze unstructured data and sentiments on social media.

**BRAND AND PRODUCT STRATEGY:** Align your brand personality and your customer experience vision with your sustainability claims. Create a panel of key internal stakeholders (R&D, product, operations, marketing, finance) and external stakeholders (clients, NGOs) to push the high-level brand and product strategy shifts, as well as to co-create.

**CAMPAIGN AND AGENCY BRIEFING:** Bring sustainability experts in and seek out guidelines for sustainability communications that marketers can use for strategy and brief creation, such as the U.K. government’s Green Claims Code, or The Fair Program, published by Union des Marques in France.

every day but aren’t aware of it. It owns 3,000 retail locations across Canada, the U.S., Caribbean, and Central and South America. Those locations are all gas stations with a retail component. Your local Pioneer station with an On The Run convenience store is an example.

Since 2017, Parkland has marketed a low-carbon fuel derived from bio-feedstock, which consists of non-food grade canola, tallow and waste from the pulp and paper industry. When blended with conventional crude, it yields a fuel that has one-eighth the carbon intensity of conventional gas or diesel. It claims that, in 2021, its renewable fuel production was equivalent to removing 70,000 passenger vehicles from the road. It is now preparing to build an expanded operation, designed to have ten-times that impact.

“We’re also about to launch an EV charging network in British Columbia – the electric charging destination of the future,” says Simon Scott, director of corporate comms at Parkland. Though it plans to eventually build standalone EV stations, for now, it’s still an add-on to gas stations.

You can see the challenge faced by Parkland. Beyond cost-savings, EV drivers are savvy about sustainability – that’s why they’re EV drivers. They may also be acutely aware of Parkland’s carbon-intensive operation and supply chain infrastructure. That said, its plans are a significant step in the transition away from fossil fuels. Unlike BP,

# URGENT: ACTION REQUIRED

To lessen the pile-up of greenwashing claims, Maple Leaf Foods is demystifying sustainability by educating consumers on confusing terminology and how to be eco stewards.



that 81% want businesses to provide information about the carbon footprint of their products.

But if a large portion of brands can't be trusted with their claims, how are consumers to decide where to spend their dollars?

That's where Maple Leaf Foods – which has taken several steps towards achieving sustainability, under the stewardship of CEO Michael McCain (pictured left) and VP of sustainability and shared value

Tim Faveri – comes in.

Beyond achieving carbon neutrality and becoming one of North America's largest producers of raised-without-antibiotics pork and poultry, Maple Leaf Foods is also supporting consumers' efforts to help the environment by educating them.

Its annual customer survey recently revealed that 92% of Canadians know they have a duty to protect the environment, but 52% don't know where to start. What's more, 42% of the respondents say they're confused by terminology.

So the brand created the "Green Glossary," a guide to understanding key environmental terms, what that means at Maple Leaf Foods and what people can do to make their own impact.

Maple Leaf Foods also recently became one of the founding companies of a new organization called the Canada Plastics Pact, with the purpose to drive innovation and increase recyclability of all types of packaging by redesigning the label to let consumers know which bin to put it in.

When it comes to evidence backing "green" claims, the statistics are shocking. According to a study released last year by the European Commission, in more than half of 344 different eco claims, brands did not provide sufficient information for consumers to judge the claim's accuracy. To say there is an urgent need for the industry to align on ways to avoid greenwashing is an understatement.

In 37% of cases, the claim included vague and general statements, such as "conscious," "eco-friendly" and "sustainable," which aimed to convey the impression that a product had no negative impact on the environment.

In 59% of cases, the brand had not provided easily accessible evidence to support its claim. Taking all of that into consideration, authorities had reason to believe that 42% of the claims may have been false or deceptive.

A Mintel survey of 2,000 Canadians found that 35% generally ignore or tune out sustainability messaging from brands. The numbers also show

Parkland is being honest in that it's not promising more than it can deliver.

The company is taking steps to help offset carbon impacts. Take its rewards program Journie for example, which is communicated to consumers on its website, via emails and B2B collateral. For all gas, diesel or propane purchases, individuals and companies can offset anywhere from 5% to 100% of their emissions – with all offsets calculated using science-based protocols and third-party auditing.

So how can companies in the energy sector, and the bankers that fund them, avoid greenwashing? "For many large enterprises, getting to net-zero is not an all-or-nothing proposition," says Haid. "It's just not realistic. Even if we could turn on the switch to be completely rid of fossil fuels overnight, we don't yet have enough capacity to produce enough renewable energy to address the gap. So, first, you have

to be honest, authentic and transparent about your current position. Say you're going to be net zero by 2040. Well, it's not fast enough, but if that's what's realistic for your business, then lay out all the steps you're going to take along the way. And report regularly on your progress. And then, of course, you actually have to do it."

Francisca Quinn, co-founder of sustainability and ESG advisors Quinn & Partners, agrees. "We typically say that 'disclosure trumps performance.' We always advise our clients to be candid in all communications. Comment on why you did not reach the target and what you are doing to address and improve," she says. "You can see examples of this in company sustainability reports... And many retail brands use strategies to build awareness and information about sustainability impact as a way to create trust. So yes, being candid is key."

We opened with the most glaring example of greenwashing, that of BP having to walk back its disastrous rebrand. Does the fossil fuel giant deserve a second chance?

In 2020, BP shared its plans for a more "sustainable" sustainability strategy. It aims to reduce oil and gas production by 40% by 2030. It is increasing its investments in renewable energy and electric vehicle charging points, and has pledged to undertake no more oil exploration in countries where it does not already have some upstream operations.

It seems the oil giant's new plan has enough specifics, and is far more transparent, than the last one. It's safe to say that it does not want to make the same mistake twice. 🚫

**A**



**PEEK  
INTO THE  
FUTURE OF  
RETAIL MEDIA**

BY MIKE CONNELL





**We are in the midst of phase three, “which is where a leveling of the playing field is giving brands a stronger voice to demand from retailers what they expect from other media publishers.”**



- Mark Williamson, CitrusAd

RETAIL MEDIA IN CANADA is still in its infancy. It’s growing and evolving, but from a true “network” perspective, there isn’t really a scalable marketing or advertising full-funnel platform that brands can truly rely on. Yet.

The “one platform we all buy on at scale is Amazon because they’re ahead of the curve in terms of their technology,” says Gautham Pingali, head of performance at Mindshare Toronto. Meaning, for the most part, advertisers can easily access inventory programmatically. Other than Amazon, most advertisers in Canada “buy direct with the big, extremely critical partners like Walmart and Loblaw” – for now.

Retail media is being heralded as a \$100 billion opportunity, “depending on who you want to believe,” says Judy Davey, VP of media policy and marketing capabilities at the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA). And Amazon, unsurprisingly, has a big chunk of that. According to its Q4 earnings report, the online retailer sold \$31.1 billion in ads on its platform in 2021.

“It’s very shiny,” says Davey of retail media’s promises. And there is considerable pressure on retailers to jump in – which is good, but “while the opportunities and ambition [to start a retail media

network] to improve the customer experience, consumer loyalty and sales is very alluring,” says Davey, it’s not always as simple as it sounds. “Execution is important and there are a number of questions that need to be answered.”

Looking at retail media in stages, the first was about “monetizing eyeballs,” says Mark Williamson, SVP, client strategy and development for CitrusAd, an Australian-based ecommerce ad-serving platform that connects brands to retailers. In Canada, CitrusAd – which was purchased by Publicis in July 2021 – powers the likes of The Bay, Jim Pattison Group and Save-On-Foods. During that first phase, Williamson notes, “neither retailer nor brand really knew what best practices were because they hadn’t been established yet.”

The second phase was driven by “data utilization within a walled garden, with super high walls built to enable exclusivity and premium rate cards,” he says, which gave retailers control, creating an environment where brands have little choice but to pay-to-play.

We are now in the midst of phase three, Williamson says, “which is where a leveling of the playing field is giving brands a stronger voice to demand from retailers the same capabilities, service levels and performance they would expect from other media publishers... and then some.” Phase three requires more retailers providing more options that drive up category sales and engender an environment where everyone wins.

“A retailer needs to think like a typical media publisher,” says Williamson. “They cannot force a media product into an onerous trade-funding mechanism. Instead, they need to pursue transparent, performance-based pricing models that are competitive among other retail media and traditional media alternatives.”

Dana Toering, VP of Walmart Connect Canada believes the future of Retail Media Networks (RMNs)

# FRIEND OR FOE? DELIVERY PLATFORMS CHASE RETAIL MEDIA AMBITIONS

BY NICK KREWEN

Walmart. Loblaws. Best Buy. Home Depot. The industry is well-aware of the famous players building retail media networks (RMNs) for advertisers. But there is another channel beyond big box that's slowly, ever-so-quietly, gunning for digital advertising dollars.

Delivery platforms like Instacart, Uber's CornerStore and DoorDash may not come with the sales pitch of being able to link digital ads with physical shopper programs like major retailers can, but that's not stopping them from investing big in online retail media.

Instacart says it wants to build a \$1 billion ad business and is working with marketers to pitch

digital versions of circulars and end caps on its app. The company's VP of ad sales Ryan Mayward says it's relying on its measurement system to attract advertisers, allowing them to track "the moment an ad is served to a person and the moment they add that item to their cart and complete their purchase."

Beyond measuring the consumer journey, Mayward says Instacart is also building its media business to be able to offer "CPG analytics like basket analysis, and help brands understand basket composition, whether they're winning net new customers, have a leaky bucket problem, or helping them understand seasonal

is going to be about personalization and connectivity. "We changed our name to Walmart Connect [from Walmart Media Group] for a reason," he says. It's not just about "media," it's about connecting media assets with retail experiences, and then further connecting all of that with digital experiences – whether that's online at home or on a device in-store. Toering references its partnership between Walmart and Stingray, where it can now weave digital audio into the media mix.

He also believes that the potential around RMNs is not just in first-party data, but also in improving reach. "Reach is hard to find, and fragmentation is real. Talk to TV buyers... They don't get the reach that they used to unless they're buying around popular live sporting events." If the Blue Jays get two million people watching one live broadcast, that's big – however, he says, major retailers get two million people a day shopping online and in-store.

Samantha Kelley, Touché Toronto's managing director, agrees that the next phase of retail media will not only be about accessing consumer data and understanding purchase patterns, but also about creating a seamless consumer journey from online to in-store, and vice-versa, she says.

That's a key focus for Loblaw Media, says the retailer's VP Ian Hewetson. "One part of our future roadmap is to bring more dynamic, connected media into real stores to close the loop for advertisers and create a more immersive experience for the customer," he says. "The realistic near-term future of retail media is the smart use of technology to accurately stitch together the customer journey from outside the store all the way down the aisle and through checkout."

While retail media's potential seems limitless, Jason Dubroy, Mosaic North America's SVP, commerce and experience, notes that very few Canadian retailers are

currently exploring opportunities beyond selling shelf space. As an example of what retailers should explore next, Dubroy references a recent *Business Insider* article that speaks to how Amazon sells ad placements on digital signage in its physical stores in the U.S., but also builds ad opportunities across the entire consumer experience – including shopping carts, digital smokescreens on refrigerator doors and checkout booths.

The key, Dubroy points out, is to close the loop between in-store capabilities and online/programmatic ad inventory.

It isn't just big box and grocery retailers that are trying to capitalize on retail media opportunities or grapple with privacy loss and forthcoming cookie degradation. Marriot recently launched the Marriot Media Network in partnership with Yahoo – arguably the first-of-its-kind for the hospitality industry – with strong data and engagement opportunities around people who travel. The network will offer ad spots across the hotel chain's online presence, and eventually TV sets in guest rooms.

However, as more players get involved, more maturity and responsibility will be required. The increasingly high walls of these networks can be daunting, and they'll have to pivot their thinking, acknowledging and

**"It's about providing media the way clients want to buy it. Right now, they're buying keywords on their own. They don't have to call us," and the next step is to develop richer content experiences in that vein.**



- Dana Toering,  
Walmart Connect Canada

➔ trends by diving deep on insights.”

Meanwhile, restaurant delivery apps like UberEats and DoorDash are also launching ad businesses that look to grab performance budgets. These delivery platforms aren't just going after QSRs like Burger King and McDonald's to place ads; they've also set sights on CPG brands like Danone, which this year purchased the first-ever grocery ad in Canada on the UberEats app driving to Cornershop, its grocery platform.

So the question is, do delivery platforms pose a serious enough threat to disrupt the flow of advertising dollars to major RMNs? Samantha Kelley, Touché

Media's managing director, isn't convinced.

“There's room for both, but they don't play the same role at all,” she says. “A volume of advertising dollars will probably live more with retail media than delivery platforms, which don't have the scale of retail media. If you compare Walmart or Canadian Tire, their traffic is almost 100 times that of Instacart.”

Kelley says the depth of first-party data that RMNs hold is another reason she doesn't see delivery platforms creating much of a disruption anytime soon.

“RMNs have spent the last three-to-five years investing in infrastructure to be able to have a single

view of the customer online and it's a gold mine of insight and data,” says Kelley. “That's really hard to compete with and hard to build. Category data, cross-category data, frequency of purchase visits and shopping habits – that's a lifetime of value. You get so much more when you have consumer data, as opposed to the last delivery or a list of shops that you've historically purchased from.”

Kelley adds that the relationship between brands and retailers is also much more reciprocal. “Because there's more room on RMNs, there's a win-win situation between the manufacturer and the retailer

embracing their role as a purveyor of media, as well as that of a retailer selling goods.

On the flipside, Williamson predicts that the walled garden concept won't fly for much longer. While data needs to be locked down, it will, perhaps counterintuitively, also need to be more transparent.

“Increasingly, brands will want to buy their own media versus a retailer doing it. More and more demand is being managed through third-party aggregators and platforms like Pacview and Skai. Retailers need to be open to receiving demand from a variety of sources.”

Toering agrees that, from a business perspective, the future of retail media is going to be geared towards automation. “It's about providing media the way clients want to buy it,” he says. “Right now, they're buying keywords and sponsored search listings on their own. They don't have to call us,” and the next step is to develop richer content experiences in that vein – so expanding the planning and purchasing of ads on

websites, apps and other media in an automated way.

Similarly, Loblaw Media is in the process of rolling out self-serve, says Hewetson. “Which is very exciting,” he adds, since that would make the retailer's platform

one of the only (as far as he knows) networks “that enables [advertisers] to target an audience and then – in close to real-time – see whether the group of customers bought in-store that day.”

Advertiser education is key, Hewetson says, noting that they have “a very deep strategy team” to help guide brands on closing the consumer journey loop, all while offering self-serve and automated options.

While there are plenty of opportunities, there are also challenges, says Williamson. “In their quest for growth, retailers are launching more and more channels... While this brings new revenue, it also tends to create fragmented, unwieldy and ultimately untenable stacks that cause retailers to hit a ceiling earlier than desired.”

This means retailers need to have “a clear vision of what they want to be when they grow up,” Williamson adds. “This will determine how they build their tech stack and partner ecosystem. They need to put a premium on flexibility and agility so they can pivot whenever needed.”

Social commerce will also play a role in the future of retail media, Dubroy says, but it's too early to tell how viable it will be. During COVID, and post-pandemic, “we have seen the growth in social commerce both in Canada and the U.S. through different social channels from Facebook and Instagram to Pinterest, Snapchat and TikTok... even Twitter is testing it out.”

Social commerce is ideal for apparel, accessories and consumer electronics, Dubroy says, “as they typically index the highest for total engagement. There is still a long way to go to prove this is a viable channel for retail media, as it's not beneficial for one SKU to drive to a retailer. The beautiful problem to solve for is how to grow basket size at the retailer to make it mutually beneficial for the vendor to support the investment.”



**“We have seen the growth in social commerce both in Canada and the U.S. through different social channels... But there is still a long way to go to prove this is a viable channel for retail media.”**

- Jason Dubroy, Mosaic North America



where [the former will say,] 'If you carry or you sell more of my products, I will invest my ad dollars.' There's a positive wheel of profit for both parties that doesn't exist with the delivery platforms."

Even though Kelley doesn't believe delivery platforms will take a significant portion of ad dollars from retailers, she does see the value in the apps' proximity to consumers. "They do have the edge in terms of being on somebody's mobile phone, so they can look at it and be incentivized with coupons and other sort of dangling carrots."

Arthur Sylvestre, director of media, digital and ecommerce, delivery platforms at Danone, says the CPG brand has been "gaining share" on Instacart and Uber's Cornershop since it started advertising on the platforms. "Ads are performing well because their technology allows for advertisers to enhance the targeting capabilities and to leverage day parting opportunities... The ROI that we're seeing is very encouraging."

Sylvestre says Danone is always looking to optimize its media mix and experiment with newer channels like delivery platforms. "With

the emergence of these online options, we're rebalancing the budgets because we're seeing opportunities to increase the percentage of spend that goes into conversion and lower-funnel activities that did not exist in the past."

"With those options, we're now able to invest some dollars where the consumer is making the purchase decision, which is in the online store," he adds. "I think there is a bit of a balance between traditional retail media and ecommerce that's going to help the efficiencies of most marketing mixes in the future."

The integration of retail media and the metaverse is also frequently talked about, although more aspirationally than practically in most cases. "If you're going from sitting in front of a screen, to putting on a headset and walking down an aisle, there are incredible opportunities," says Toering. "You can imagine more immersive and high-quality media experiences," but what that will truly look like and how it will scale is still a big question. Google "Walmart metaverse shopping," says Toering, and you will see the potential being discussed. But that's all it is – discussions.

Loblaw's Hewetson agrees. "Before we think about diving headfirst into a virtual world, we should focus on the tangible benefits of retail media. The technical overhead of stocking virtual shelves with 3D products would probably outweigh any benefits to the customer at this point; it all feels a bit gimmicky," he says.

"Until meta commerce is mass adopted as a significant volume channel, it will have a very small role to play outside of gaming and community spaces for now," adds Dubroy. "The real opportunities right now are augmented retail storefronts that allow for commerce to take place that virtually mimics the physical experience."

All told, retail media has an interesting future, with varied implications for advertisers, retailers and consumers alike. It will involve more personalization while protecting personally identifiable information. To be successful, it will need to be scalable and omnichannel. The media itself will also need to be self-serve. And the ever-growing revenue opportunities will keep the door open for new players – with some brands, like Nike for example, refusing to sell on networks like Amazon and going direct-to-consumer.

"Nike knows its customers. They know their purchasing behaviour. They know how to upsell and use that data," says Alex Panousis, global executive client

leadership and solutions lead at Valtech. "That's not what a brand is going to get when they jump in with Walmart," so in order to legitimize and solidify the value of a retail media network, Panousis says the future is about building the relationship between advertiser and retailer.

Canadian retailers have a real opportunity through retail media networks, says Dubroy, "but they must adapt to the needs of the brands, follow the success of the U.S. and global innovation in the space, and invest in models that fish where the fish are."

He adds that Canadian RMNs should continue to showcase their value propositions, not just why to use them, but how to spend efficiently within the platforms themselves. "This will help RMNs to rationalize that they are the best place for brands to spend their dollars and justify the premium cost over traditional media, which is a discussion still had in many client boardrooms."

"Retail media has to be part of a brand's omnichannel strategy," Panousis says. "But as the industry becomes more mature, we're looking more at advertising effectiveness and better customer experiences – where the retailer and the brand are increasingly co-conspirators or partners in that media relationship." 

**"The industry is looking more at advertising effectiveness and better customer experiences – where the retailer and the brand are increasingly co-conspirators or partners in that media relationship."**



- Alex Panousis, Valtech

# Spec creative pitches often cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Guess who's footing the bill.

**Y**ou, the client. (Yes, we know it sounds absurd and hard to believe.) But when an agency participates in a new business pitch that requires spec creative, their existing clients are the ones unknowingly picking up the considerable tab.

## **Our industry's dirty little secret.**

Agencies divert resources away from their paying clients in order to fuel new business. Essentially, existing clients go to the “back of the line” internally because the pitch becomes the agency’s sole focus. It’s an industry-wide practice that’s rarely discussed in an open forum, especially if clients are within earshot.

## **An industry relic.**

Despite its many flaws, spec work remains entrenched in our industry. It’s an antiquated practice that’s been part of the creative world for decades and endures as a troublesome cog in the increasingly bureaucratic procurement machine.

It’s time to unchain everyone from this painfully outdated process because spec creative is bad for agencies, bad for the entire industry, and yes, in the end, bad for clients too. On the surface, it may seem like a good idea for clients to harvest a smorgasbord of free ideas during the pitch process, but this can actually do you more harm than good. Here’s why:



## Spec work isn't an accurate reflection of an agency's creative expertise.

Talented freelancers are brought in frequently to fill in for the creatives who work full-time at an agency but are often too busy to work on the pitch. As a result, you don't get a clear picture of the kind of work to expect from the real team who would be working on your business.

## It can be a big, shiny distraction.

Agencies know how to seduce clients with dazzling creative work. But if you choose an agency based on an emotional reaction to a creative concept instead of a thorough evaluation of all the important criteria, chances are you're not going to wind up with your ideal long-term partner.



## It can hinder groundbreaking ideas.

When an agency invests major time and money into a pitch, it's extremely unlikely they'll be brave enough to bring forward an earth-shattering new concept. It's too risky in a pitch. Instead, they'll often offer up work that will 'win the pitch'. And work that simply wins the pitch may not be what your brand actually needs.

## So what's a client to do?

Maybe you're starting to come around on eliminating spec creative from your pitch process, but you still need a proven way to determine your best agency partner. So here are a few approaches for you to consider that are far more effective:

### 1. Get to know each other.

Do one-on-one interviews with the people who will be the day-to-day agency team: the account person, the strategic planner, the creative director, etc. Also, try an exercise of rapid-fire questions between client and agency to generate authentic interactions that will give a good idea of how you might work together.

### 2. Consider the agency's track record.

No, past accomplishments can't always predict future success. But it's much harder to go wrong when you hire an agency with a proven track record of producing brilliant work that solves a legitimate client problem. Bonus points if they've successfully done it for clients across several industries or markets.

### 3. Talk to the agency's existing clients.

There's nobody better at pointing out an agency's major strengths and weaknesses than a client who's currently working with them. Be certain to pay close attention to any client that has a long-standing relationship with the agency you're considering.

They can often provide invaluable perspective on turnover within an agency and if (or how) this has affected the work, the relationship, or the business as a whole over the years.

### 4. Give the agency a project.

If you really want to see creative work, give an agency you admire a real live project, collaborate with them in the creative development process, and compensate them as though they were already your partner. In essence, see how you would work together in the real world.

### 5. Start with a better RFP.

Finding the right agency begins with your RFP. It's the first impression an agency has of collaborating with you. If you send out an RFP with an automated "To whom it may concern," you risk scaring away great agencies who could see this as a red flag of a bureaucratic, impersonal process. Be selective and avoid the agency cattle call of 10 or more shops. It indicates you may not know what you're looking for in a potential partner. Ensure RFP ground rules are very well established from the outset. And make sure all agencies are competing on equal terms and the consequences for any shop that breaks them are well-communicated.



A Smarter RFP

### 6. Use a reputable pitch consultant.

Of course, you could save yourself all this trouble by hiring a credible, well-respected third-party pitch consultant to help you navigate the process. They can bring invaluable industry knowledge and act as an excellent matchmaker because they have their finger on the pulse of the constantly changing agency landscape.

## Why then, do so many pitches still request spec work?

Ultimately, there's one big reason to stick with spec creative pitches: It's the way things have always been done. Certainly, this archaic process may feel familiar and won't make waves with CEOs or within corporate boardrooms. But how often does defaulting to the familiar choice turn out to be the best choice?

## Pitch, rinse, and repeat.


Clients who repeatedly ask for spec creative in pitches are often the same ones who don't have a long-lasting relationship with their agency. Just think of all the wasted hours you'll likely spend searching for a new partner and then bringing them up to speed, only to have to go through the process all over again a few years later. And that lost opportunity is a significant cost you and your business may not be able to afford.

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Wunderman Thompson



NANCY CRIMI-LAMANNA  
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DHAIVAL BHATT  
Courage

JOHANNA ANDRÉN  
IKEA

# O, Canadian Creativity!

Ad land has had a tough go of it these last few years. Yet, Canadian agencies continue to punch above their weight, rising above constraints to stand amongst giants on the global stage. More and more of our shops are becoming international household names for creating work that defies conventions, spurs innovation and solves problems. To talk about Canada's secret sauce, *strategy*, in partnership with the *Globe & Mail*, invited some of the country's top CCOs, CMOs and CSOs to a roundtable discussion in Toronto.

MODERATED BY JOSH KOLM, EDITED BY CHELSEA CLARKE & JENNIFER HORN

**Where do you think Canadian agencies excel when it comes to creative disciplines?**

**Mo Bofill:** Canadians have been really great at brand transformations. Really understanding the whole experience, from figuring out the strategic platform, to thinking about how we


communicate that as a brand. And then building the design system that underpins all of that. I'm seeing a lot more of that from brands over the last few years.

**Nancy Crimi-Lamanna:** We're really good at solving the hard stuff, and brand transformation


and platforms are hard to solve for. I think it's because we're a small market, and therefore creatives and strategists get to work on a variety of businesses. It's an incredibly rich learning ground, where our trajectory is much faster and much more steep. In bigger markets, you get to work on one client for five or six years, and I'm not sure you get the depth of experience you need to be able to solve big problems.

**Ari Elkouby:** Canadians know how to use advertising to solve a problem, not just raise awareness of an issue. There's been some inventive uses of technology, and platforms that have been created, to solve a business or societal problem. Look at some of the winning cases like Juniper Park\TBWA's "Signal for Help." They could have said, "Hey, people are being abducted. Watch out for people being abducted." No, they decided to try to solve it with a hand signal. Another example is IKEA and Rethink's "ScrapsBook," which is a solution to food waste. To me, that's what separates Canada from other markets. The willingness to go that extra level deeper and figure out how to crack a problem.






**MO BOFILL**  
123W



**SEAN MCDONALD**  
Rethink



**LORI DAVISON**  
ROM

**Dhaval Bhatt:** Canada can't compete with larger big-budget markets like the U.S. on craft. We're not going to outspend them on film production. So, for us, it's always been about hacking solutions. We were always the ones hacking stuff, and now suddenly, clients all over the world want that. That's where we have a great leg up.

**Lori Davison:** And there's also something in the lack of scale that forces an intensity in Canada. I remember distinctly when I was agency-side, I was running the General Electric account and I went to New York for a meeting and my job was being done by as many people as there are sitting at this table. I thought to myself, "I'm working all these muscles that you guys are not." Part of our culture is to lift above our weight. There are so many areas that we're expected to do that – it's the Canadian survival that drives us.

**The way agencies are set up can have an impact on creative output. Are there certain models or processes that Canadian agencies have adopted that makes the work better?**

**Bofill:** As Canadians, we're massive collaborators in an industry where there is a rise in in-housing. You have brands that need to handle massive executions, with a lot of tentacles. I find that we don't really have the traditional client-agency relationship – we're actually an extension of their in-house team. And because Canadians are so nice, collaboration is easier, but we're also transparent, honest and respectful. When you have happier people collaborating, you work quicker, there's less friction, and egos are out of the way. Also, all of the leaders at this table are empathetic leaders. I find that there's a lot more strength in the work when there's empathy.

**Elkouby:** We often work with the U.S. and there is an element of hostility that they bring to the table without even having met you. But that's usually immediately defused as soon as our Canadian-ism shows up. When we don't show up looking to out-gun, or take credit, or grab the opportunity – we're just there to cooperate – it makes the whole process run smoother. It isn't like that everywhere and I think we take it for granted.

“OUR LACK OF SCALE FORCES AN INTENSITY IN CANADA. PART OF OUR CULTURE IS TO LIFT ABOVE OUR WEIGHT. IT'S THE CANADIAN SURVIVAL THAT DRIVES US.” - **Lori Davison**

**Sean McDonald:** What's interesting for us right now, having opened up in New York, is that we've noticed every client wants a more honest, genuine relationship where you tell the truth. They want to talk about what plagues you, or what excites you. I think a huge mistake that agencies make is not being honest with what they want. I think they're hiding that they're motivated by profit or what they want to achieve creatively. I also don't think Canadians come from a background of aggressive sales – we come from ambition and overcoming obstacles. And from my personal experience, that's welcomed by clients.



“

“I HAVE A LOT OF EMPATHY FOR CLIENTS, BECAUSE THERE ARE IDEAS THAT CAN TAKE A LEAP OF FAITH. BUT THAT’S WHAT I LOVE ABOUT CANADIAN ADVERTISING: THE INVENTIVENESS” - Ari Elkouby

”

**For the agencies at the table, how much do you push clients on creative ideas? And for the clients, how much do you want to be pushed?**

**Bhatt:** Frankly, with some of our best clients, there is an expectation to be made to feel a little uncomfortable. We see more of them wanting to be pushed. And I think that goes back to Sean’s point, where there is a clear understanding of what the expectations are, and communicating human-to-human what each of our agendas are.

**Johanna Andren:** Clients really want the agency to love the ideas that are being presented – as long as they’re not pushing us to take too many risks that could come back at us in negative PR. We want a healthy discussion. But, in general in Canada, I think we could be challenged even more. For the most part, there is a more collaborative, interactive way of working here that I really appreciate. There is no sitting on high horses. We are partners, we’re in the same boat.

**Crimi-Lamanna:** Getting to great work takes a relationship. And nothing happens overnight. Also, we’re not in the business of “good” meetings. When our goal is to have a good meeting, what we hear back from the client is, “Oh, you didn’t push us hard.” When we do try to sell a risky idea that we know will blow up in culture, we work with clients to identify all of the risks and have answers for anything that we think could come up. We have someone moderating social to understand what’s happening and have those answers ready.

**McDonald:** I fundamentally hate it when people say that clients should be “brave.” We’re just demanding the outcome without being accountable for it, just because it would benefit our process. Why not talk about ambition? It respects what it takes to do well in your organization and in mine. Bravery is an emotion that you’re asking clients to have in the face of obstacles. Make them feel comfortable. Give them confidence.

**Andren:** Also, as a client, you’re being challenged by all these people within the organization who don’t know much about marketing. So I think it’s important to encourage a client to be brave, but in the right conditions.

**Elkouby:** I have a lot of empathy for clients, because there are ideas that can take a leap of faith. But that’s what I love about Canadian advertising: The inventiveness. Sometimes when you’re leading a wave of innovation, there’s no safety net. There’s nothing to say, “Well, this has been done 10 times before, and I know what



**The Globe and Mail is a proud supporter of creativity and innovation in Canada and around the globe.**



The last few years have been challenging for us all. Having the creative industry gather to collectively discuss the incredible work being done here at home is invaluable.

That's why The Globe supports this creativity roundtable program. As Canadians look to brands as agents of change, the creative community continues to innovate and inspire. As champions of creativity, we're proud to be a part of a conversation that celebrates excellence, and nurturing a culture that allows the Canadian media industry to continue to grow and thrive.

– Andrew Saunders  
CRO, The Globe and Mail

The Globe and Mail is proud to be Canada's official representative for the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity and to be part of promoting Canadian talent and expertise to the world.

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“WE CAN'T REALLY UNDERESTIMATE THE BARRIERS THAT ARE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW. BUT THE FACT THAT WE'RE EXECUTING ALL THIS GREAT WORK ON TOP OF THAT SAYS SOMETHING ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF CANADIAN CREATIVITY.” - Mo Bofill

”

the outcome is.” I have to give it to Canadian clients who are willing to go on a less-travelled journey. Because not everyone does.

**Crimi-Lamanna:** It's one of my favourite sayings: “Leap and a net will appear.” We always figure it out, even though it sounds like a big, scary goal, and like something you've never done before.

**How do your agencies approach global ideas? Do you purposely look to create ideas that cross borders?**

**McDonald:** I was talking with some people a couple years ago and I remember hitting the table saying, “We are a global agency!” Being a global agency is not defined by where you pay rent. Can you do work that has a global impact, that resonates globally? Publications might cover us as “Rethink, a Canadian agency,” but if you're from the U.K., or from the U.S., you're considered a global shop. I personally resent that, because the people sitting at this table and the people I work with, the marketers and the agencies, are all global talent.

We also understand universal insights. For example, IKEA does a lot to invest in the understanding and comprehension of its brand, and shares that globally, which benefits us, and therefore we can create globally impactful work. It starts with ourselves, to know that we're all global talent, and we can have a global impact. And that's just a mindset.

**A lot of things have changed because of the pandemic. Have any of those changes been beneficial to the industry or to your agency?**

**Elkouby:** Helping brands get through a pandemic is something marketers haven't asked agencies to do before. And over the last

few years they let us in behind the curtain. I've had conversations with my clients that I've never had before, where they're disclosing things about how they operate that generally don't get discussed with agencies. So, to me, that's created a bond unlike anything we've experienced. It's fostered a relationship that is far stronger than before.

**McDonald:** As an agency, we've never worked better together between offices than we do now. We're not even going to talk about offices anymore. We're just an agency in lots of different

engagement, with no guarantee of future work. Those AOR relationships show the power of strong relationships and what they can create. There are great marketers here who have an understanding of that relationship – build a strong foundation and the work will come.

**McDonald:** I think that if you stand for your value, and you ask for it, then that is what it's worth. You need to believe that the five or six ideas you present to a client are not worthless. They're globally good, not just Canada good. I think then you can get a retainer at a high



places. But I am concerned about the experience of those starting in advertising. I find myself wondering if we are all doing what we can for the people at the beginning, not just those further in their career. I don't have an answer for that, but I know we spend a lot of time talking about it. If we want to keep doing all the good stuff we're talking about today, that generation has to benefit the same way we did through listening and watching and doing.

**Is there anything that's currently holding the creative industry back?**

**Elkouby:** I think one barrier – it's not a new trend – but I think the movement of clients away from AOR status to more project-based work is still a huge problem for agencies when it comes to staffing, as well as working and learning the business. Those AOR relationships that used to be long-standing seem to be fewer. And if you're trying to attract talent in the country, or even around the world, it's hard to do when there's a small client

value, with a long-lasting relationship. I'm not saying it's easy, but attitudinally, we're going through a moment.

**Crimi-Lamanna:** Don't forget the rising costs of talent. We're going to have to figure that out. We're not a big market, our clients don't have big budgets, but we can't keep absorbing the extra cost of talent. So that value proposition is going to have to change, because I'm paying 20% more for talent across the board. The costs have risen dramatically and they're going to have to be passed on somehow.

**Bofill:** As leaders, we can forget how challenged we are with the great exodus and rising costs, as well as mental health issues people are going through – the industry's tumultuous right now. We can't underestimate a lot of these barriers that are happening. But the fact that we're executing all this great work on top of that, after a pandemic, says something about the strength of Canadian creativity. 

The Canadian Young Lions competitions bring out the best young talent in the advertising and marketing industry. This year, 448 competitors across five competition categories, tackled a challenging brief under extreme time pressure for a chance to be crowned as Canada's best. Gold winners go on to the Global Young Lions Competition to compete against some of the most creative teams from all over the world. **Congratulations to all the winning teams!**

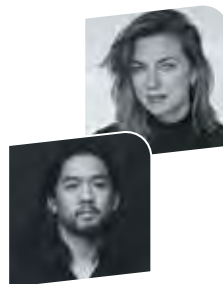
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Art Director, FCB  
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**GENEVIÈVE JETTÉ**,  
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**MAXINE HOOD**,  
Assistant Editor, Sid Lee  
**MAC THOMSON**,  
Assistant Editor, Sid Lee



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**CHARLES CABOCHE**,  
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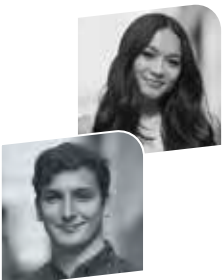
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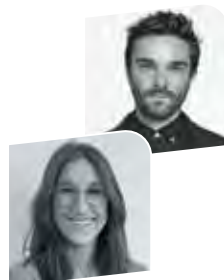
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Miss Vickie's, Smartfood, Sun  
Chips, PepsiCo Foods Canada



**MATT BISSONNETTE**,  
Marketing Analytics Manager,  
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**LILY SHUI**,  
National Marketing Consultant,  
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**MELISA BAYRAV**,  
Senior Brand Manager, Corona &  
Modelo, Labatt/AB Inbev



**MICHELLE SKEA**,  
Senior Brand Manager, Stella  
Artois, Labatt/AB Inbev



## YOUNG LIONS JURIES

Submissions for the Young Lions Competitions are judged by an esteemed panel of industry experts. Juries of experienced advertising and marketing executives review, debate and determine the top winning teams. Thank you to our jury chairs and jurors:



Jury Chair -  
Print/Digital/Film

**Mary Maddever**  
EVP, Canadian  
Media Brands  
and Editorial Director,  
Brunico Communications

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**Glen D'Souza**, Executive Creative Director,  
Forsman & Bodenfors

**Karen Howe**, Founder & Creative Director,  
The Township Group

**Jack Latulippe**, Partner & Chief Creative Officer,  
No Fixed Address

**Lisa Lebedovich**, Executive Creative Director, Will

**Ian MacKellar**, VP, Executive Creative Director,  
INNOCEAN Worldwide Canada

**David Mueller**, Creative Director, Bensimon Byrne

**Gail Pak**, VP, Creative Director, McCann Canada

**Terri Roberts**, Creative Director, Ray Agency

### FILM & DIGITAL JURORS

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**Derek Blais**, Senior VP, Executive Creative Director,  
BBDO Canada

**Wain Choi**, Executive Creative Director, Zulu Alpha Kilo

**Jeffrey Da Silva**, Partner & Executive Creative Director,  
Sid Lee

**Ari Elkouby**, Chief Creative Officer,  
Wunderman Thompson Canada

**Roni Gellert**, Creative Director, Anomaly

**Geneviève Langlois**, Partner, Creative Director, Ig2

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**Sann Sava**, chef de la création / Chief Creative Officer,  
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**Andy Braunston**, VP of Strategy and Insight, Wavemaker Canada

**Gabrielle Côté**, Media Director, Touche

**Kris Davis**, Senior VP, Media Experts Media

**Helen Galanis**, Chief Executive Officer, Initiative

**David Jowett**, Partner, Epitaph Group

**Kevin Kivi**, EVP, General Manager, Horizon Media

**Brooke Leland**, Managing Partner, Jungle Media

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**Caroline Moul**, President, PHD Toronto

**Kristie Painting**, Chief Executive Officer, Wavemaker Canada

**Shelley Smit**, Chief Executive Officer, UM Canada

**Alastair Taylor**, Chief Executive Officer, Publicis Media

**Sarah Thompson**, Chief Strategy Officer, Mindshare Canada

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Kruger Products L.P.

### MARKETERS JURORS

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Montreal Children's Hospital Foundation

**Andrea Hunt**, Chief Marketing Officer

**Steve Levy**, COO, Ipsos Canada

**Aaron Nemoy**, Founder & CEO, Crowdiat

**Eva Salem**, SVP, Marketing and Brand, Canadian Tire Retail

**Sandra Sanderson**, Senior VP of Marketing, Empire Company Ltd

**Jill Schnarr**, Chief Communications Officer, Telus

**Trinh Tham**, Chief Marketing Officer, Harry Rosen

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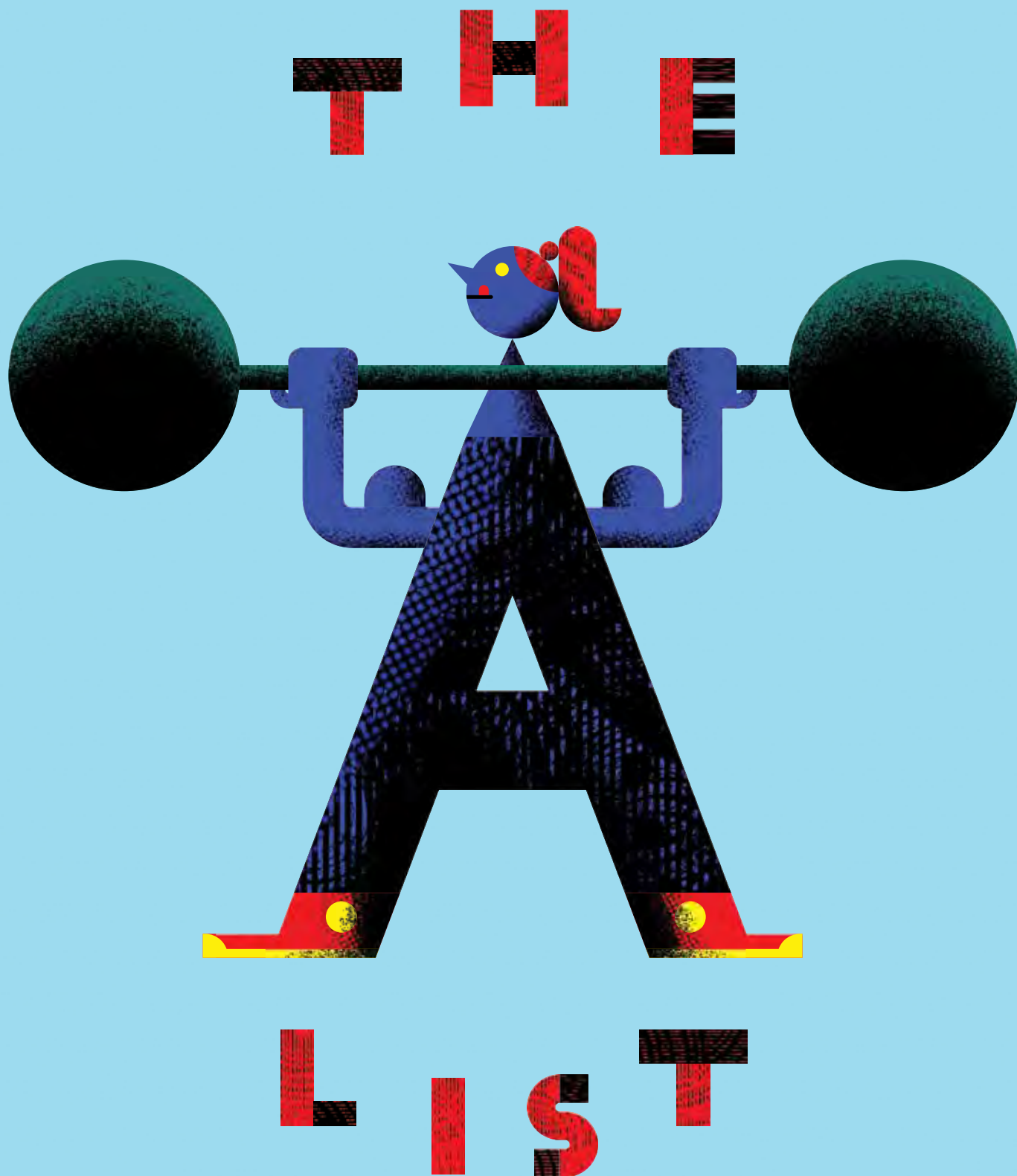
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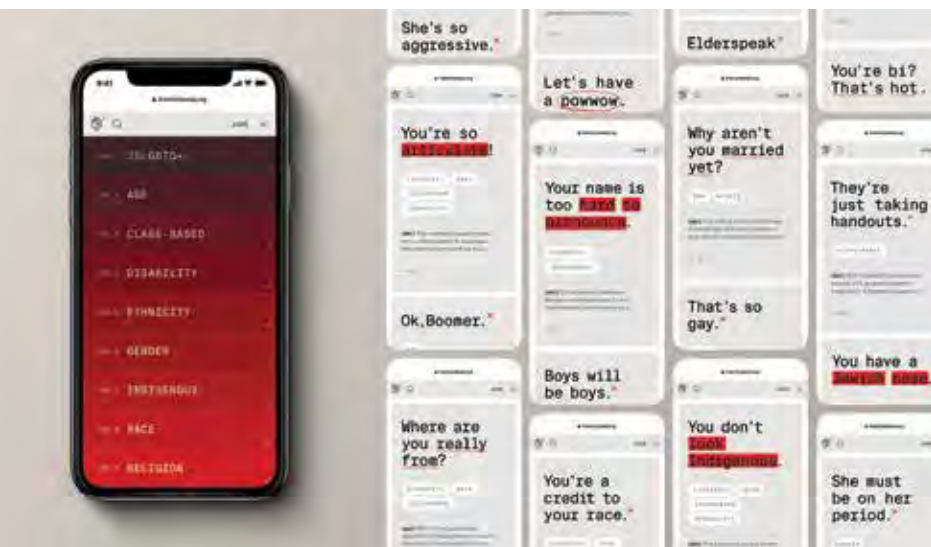
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Reshaping brand expectations: how Canada's top creative agencies are setting the bar higher



**Left:** *The Micropedia of Microaggressions* is an online tool created to equip people with an understanding of microaggressions, one of the most common forms of discrimination faced by marginalized groups. Developed on behalf of a coalition of leading diversity organizations, the tool invites users to contribute their own experiences of microaggressions.

## Firing on all cylinders

### Zulu Alpha Kilo: what being brave and unconventional can do

**ALTHOUGH ZULU ALPHA KILO HAS BEEN KNOWN AS** an industry maverick for nearly a decade and a half, it's still finding ways to raise the bar. In fact, maybe the best descriptor to capture the year that was, would be "transformational."

For Zulu chief creative officer and chairman Zak Mroueh, the transformation started when he handed his CEO reigns to long-time president Mike Sutton. "Mike's a masterful planner with a mandate to set us up for the future," says Mroueh. This decision allowed Zulu's founder, along with his creative leadership team, to focus solely on the agency's creative output.

What followed was a slew of accolades from the major international trades: Campaign US' indie AOY; The Drum UK's Agency of the Year; Campaign Global's Creative Agency of the Year (silver) and Independent Agency of the Year (bronze); and Ad Age's International Small Agency of the Year (silver); as well as being ranked in the top 10 of independent agencies at the D&AD and One Show.

Then Mroueh found himself shortlisted as a Diversity & Inclusion Champion of the Year at Ad Age's A-List and Creativity Awards gala – and inducted into Canada's Marketing Hall of Legends in May.

The team opened a Vancouver office under managing director David Tremblay; brought in a pair of well-respected ECDs in Michael Mayes and Dean Lee; and hired Christine McNab as the agency's first CMO.

By any account, Zulu is firing on all cylinders despite the pandemic. McNab says the year was all about being intentionally brave.

"Maybe it's because we were founded [in 2008] during a recession," suggests McNab, who joined the agency in

January. "We started in a chaotic period, so it's part of Zulu's DNA to take risks and rise to the challenge during tough times."

"Since day one, our mission has never wavered. It's always been about doing unconventional work and applying lateral thinking to how we solve client business challenges," Tremblay adds.

Zulu gets so much done because it moves quickly once a decision is made. It allocated the investment for Zulubot – its creative production and content studio – an hour after a meeting sparked the idea. The same was true of the Vancouver expansion. It's about growth guided by a belief system, decisiveness and the power to move at lightning speed as an independent.

"In a good way, we've kept a small agency mentality throughout our successes," Tremblay says. "We stick to our principles and put our people and clients first."

Over the past year, the agency launched the successful "Welcome to Uncommon" brand platform for Subaru on social, high-impact digital and across the dealer network.

Zulu also did some of its best work for the greater good, such as *The Micropedia of Microaggressions* project on behalf of a coalition of Canada's leading diversity organizations. The online tool was created to equip people with an understanding of microaggressions, one of the most common forms of discrimination that marginalized groups face.

And consider Tough Turban for Pfaff Harley-Davidson – a fabric that can be folded like traditional Sikh headwear, but which hardens on impact. It means Sikh motorcyclists no longer have to choose between their beliefs and safety.

"We have strong values around diversity and inclusion," notes McNab. "*Micropedia* and Tough Turban make a statement – not just externally, but internally as well – that we truly believe in and follow through with what we say."

Zulu backed it up with the 20Doors scholarship fund launched by its founder with the commitment to create educational and mentorship opportunities for 20 aspiring BIPOC creatives.

"We've never been in the advertising, design or digital business," says Mroueh. "We've always been in the bravery business. That's what drives our decision-making. We believe the world needs more creativity. So, for us, the driving force of the company has always been about doing amazing things for all the brands we work on – and, as a company, doing good in the world."





**Left: 1** The “Year One” TV spot imagines the first Winter Olympic Games struggling to find an audience in Ancient Greece before the existence of client Bell and Canada’s best network service. Zulu launched the 60-second TV spot along with OLV and high-impact OOH.

**2** To launch a limited-time flavour of Goldfish, Zulu looked to engage a fickle teen audience trained to ignore traditional advertising. The agency developed a Snapchat lens in which players had to focus on a Flavour Blasted Kravin’ Ketchup Cracker for more than 9 seconds to unlock a promo code.

**3** Working with Interac, Zulu developed transparent billboards. The see-through boards, set up in bustling holiday markets and local retailers, turned the real-life holiday activities of Canadian shoppers into living tableaus that celebrated the post-lockdown return to seasonal events and celebrations.

**4** Subaru’s “Welcome to Uncommon” platform marked a change in marketing. The brand went from one focused on product to one that champions the individuals driving their product. Launch materials celebrate the colourful, eccentric folks that choose Subaru to empower their lives.

**5** To establish the relevance of Girl Guides to young girls and their parents, Zulu took one of the organization’s most iconic assets – campfire songs – and reinvented them as modern anthems addressing the topics that inspire girls today, such as equality, inclusion, and individuality.

**6** To promote Harry Rosen’s golf apparel, Zulu mimicked a live golf broadcast, tricking viewers into thinking the commercials were real golf coverage. But instead of focusing on golf, they focus on the golfers’ clothes, “setting the tone” for the retailer’s entry into the golf category.



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# Powering a culture of innovation

Fueled by its fierce commitment to culture, UM works to future-proof its people, clients and community



ON PAPER, UM MIGHT DESCRIBE itself as a full-service media agency and marketing consultancy, but that doesn't entirely capture it. It sees itself in the business of future-proofing both its clients and its people – and that has been particularly useful of late.

"The last two years have been about learning and evolving," says Toronto-based UM CEO Shelley Smit. "In this environment of continuous change, our commitment to nurturing a culture of innovation is more important than ever. We've had to be comfortable with the uncomfortable, taking risks and exploring new ways to succeed."

She says the success of the agency – with offices and about 340 employees in Toronto, Montreal and Calgary as part of the global firm – has come down to its core values of candour, courage and community. "We strive to create an environment where our people feel supported and trusted to stretch their thinking and be more creative," she adds.

That approach has resulted in a talent turnover rate about one third the industry average, and goes a long way in explaining why Smit was named Media Leader of the Year at the 2021 Media Innovation Awards.

UM wants every team member to feel like they can contribute and make a difference. To that end, it makes a point of celebrating innovative and creative work internally – and offering plenty of opportunities for skills building.

Consider the in-house BETTER U development platform, which includes modules on planning, creativity, and insights

**Above:** UM helped BMO launch a global first, the BMO NXT LVL stream on Twitch in partnership with FCB. The campaign featured three episodes on BMO's new Twitch channel with BMO "gaming relations specialist" Sean Frame playing live games and talking financial literacy.

discovery; and the Futureproof Certified program, which offers advanced skills certification intended to build business acumen.

"There's a phrase we use: 'Act like an owner,'" adds Richard Fofana, EVP strategy, UM. "We want our clients' brands to thrive and we want our people and teams to do the same."

UM encourages its people to expand their skill sets and perspectives to more deeply support clients as business partners – including having clients at the table throughout the process.

"Clients have to be more involved," says Smit. "Their business is moving faster, and we have to move faster, too. We don't have the luxury of time to wait and do the big reveal, and clients are enjoying being part of the phases."

UM is being proactive. The Futureproof Growth Audit allows it to better understand a client's business and anticipate what's coming. UM's Futurecaster tool, meanwhile, offers a deep dive into a client's audience, identifying and quantifying emerging media and tech opportunities by segment.

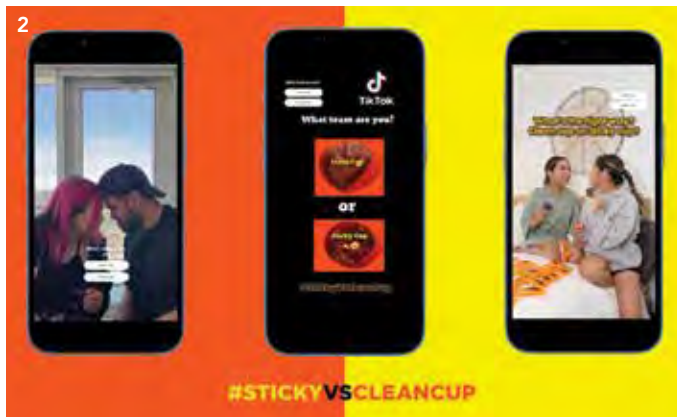
Case in point: BMO NXT LVL, a Twitch channel recently launched with help from UM and FCB that livestreams gaming and throws in doses of financial advice for gamers – a first for a financial institution.

On the social responsibility side, UM has its annual Impact Day, when the team gathers to support local communities. Last year, UM partnered with BIPOC-owned businesses to offer media consulting to help them optimize their media spend while sourcing over \$225,000 of media for them.

"We're creating new ways to connect with consumers and new content that builds off what we do," sums Fofana. Some of those connections in the last year were on behalf of new clients SkipTheDishes, PokerStars, HelloFresh, Mark Anthony and Activision.

And the results are garnering industry acclaim with the agency pulling in 79 awards in 2021, earning the "most awarded" media agency title for the second year in a row at both the CMA Awards and the Media Innovation Awards, with a pack-leading 18 wins at the MIAs.

"We start every client conversation with: How's your business doing? What are the drivers? What does success look like?" Smit says. "So, when we talk about innovation, it's not just about doing fun, interesting things. We're trying to find new ways to drive better business results for clients – and nothing excites us more."



**Above:** 1 Levi's Canada partnered with UM on a global-first, immersive brand and e-commerce experience. The agency collaborated with Snapchat to build an AI-powered, double-portal camera lens activation that allowed Gen Z to explore, try on and purchase Levi's clothing. 2 Hershey Canada's Reese's Peanut Butter Cups asked consumers how they felt about the smudge of chocolate and peanut butter left behind in the wrapper. Do they prefer their wrapper clean or sticky? For this UM-led media campaign, the brand leveraged TV, OOH, and an industry-first social media engagement to fuel a national debate. 3 With patios re-opening, Boston Pizza wanted to break through the clutter and boost sales. To retrain Canadians on how to get back to "patio-ing," UM created a media-powered, illustrative guide that was brought to life across multiple media touchpoints, including Pinterest and Instagram stories. 4 To strengthen Neutrogena Make-up Removing Cleansing Wipes' brand position, UM developed a branded content strategy through a partnership with Bell Media to make them the

official make-up remover for *Canada's Drag Race*. Neutrogena was integrated through in-show placement and product usage, earning high impression levels. 5 In response to the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on small businesses, Amex and UM launched a campaign to encourage Canadians to "Shop Small" and to make a purchase with purpose. To drive action, the agency created the #ShopSmallStories video series, launched virtual Twitter pop-up shops profiling owners, collaborated with local influencers and invited cardmembers to act through a social-media-driven incentive program.



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# Reinventing the rules of media

Initiative's new ventures lean into gaming and seek stickier experiences



**INITIATIVE'S RECENT MEDIA AOY GOLD** award wins [2019 and 2021] have fueled the shop's relentless need to reinvent what success looks like, says Helen Galanis, its Canadian CEO who leads the over 150-strong Toronto office.

"We want to focus on what we can do better than anyone else," she says. "There are areas of opportunity that challenge the boundaries around what a media agency has traditionally focused on, and that's what is motivating us."

That means reinventing the rules of media. "We believe consumer ad avoidance is the fundamental problem facing the industry," Galanis says. So the agency has launched a number of new endeavours in the interest of removing the barriers that get in the way of great work.

Transforming media planning has been a core focus for years, but to take it to the next level, Galanis installed Ryan Van Dongen as head of communications design

**Top:** For Destination Ontario's "First Winters," Initiative noticed the more winters Ontarians experienced, the more they took them for granted. So Ontario's recent immigrants were turned into travel advocates and their first-hand winter experiences were used to inspire the rest of the province. **Right: 1** To address the surging post-pandemic demand for travel, Travel Alberta developed "Wide Open Spaces," a series of interactive virtual vacations with National Geographic that offered audiences a chance to experience two of Alberta's most iconic hikes from their sofas. **2** To build excitement around its mobile app, Wendy's launched a limited-edition mobile phone featuring a custom voice assistant named Wendy. Initiative used Wendy to engage audiences across Twitter and Spotify with friendly banter and personalized audio ads. **3** To promote CBC's new series *Strays*, Initiative planned an entire media strategy around reaching audiences through their dogs – which included a dog-friendly ice cream truck that targeted local dog parks. **4** To promote drama series *The Wheel of Time* on Amazon Prime Video, Initiative focused on bringing to life the concepts of good vs. evil and light vs. dark with larger-than-life OOH executions, including a first-to-market 3D shadow board and anamorphic creative at Yonge-Dundas Square.



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with a broad mandate to focus on the craft of media planning.

While redefining the role of the media agency is ongoing, so too is identifying opportunity. And a big one can be found in gaming, a multi-billion dollar industry with a complex media ecosystem, reaching over 60% of Canadians with an increasingly broad audience.

Says Galanis, "We wanted to understand gaming from strategy through to activation," including all the audience subcultures and identify the different ways clients can tap into them.

Enter the agency's new gaming practice, launched in December to develop gaming expertise across partners, platforms and personalities, and to operationalize all gaming-related offerings across parent IPG Mediabrands and IPG tech company Kinesso.

Whether it's the metaverse or new levels of influencer engagement, gaming culture is media in 2022, so it was important to assign a cross-functional team to it, including strategists, audience experts, planners, and partnership specialists, working together to understand the opportunities from all sides, and championed by Van Dongen. The agency is excited about a number of client engagement opportunities, including one with Wendy's.

Meanwhile, the role of Initiative's Storyline division is to create relevance through original storytelling.

The new content practice launched in 2020 to develop strategies to deliver stickier, more memorable and meaningful audience experiences. This means a focus on new content formats, purpose-driven storytelling with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion, and opportunities engineered to drive audience participation.

However, a great idea is only valuable if it can be executed, and

after noticing some of the agency's best concepts weren't coming to fruition, Initiative introduced Limitless Media, a venture whereby planners can tap into the production support they need to execute their biggest and most groundbreaking visions.

"It's about creating a team and building new partnerships that will allow us to create media plans that aren't off a rate card or pulled out of a media kit," Galanis explains, holding up a recent campaign for Destination Ontario as an example.

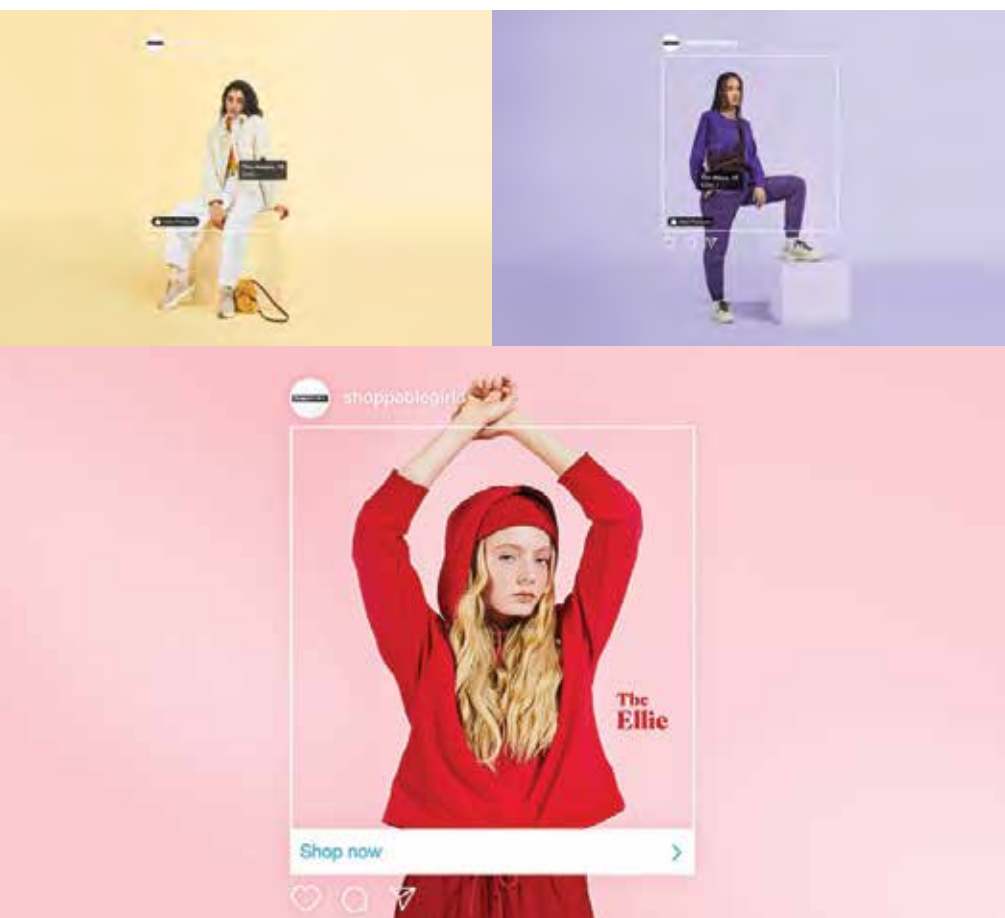
The challenge? Motivate Ontarians to explore their own province over the winter, leading to a campaign built on the insight that the more winters you live through, the less you seem to enjoy them. "First Winters" used recent immigrants to Ontario as its travel ambassadors.

The series paired three newcomers with local artists, developing stories that invited the rest of the province to remember what they love about winter in the province. The work ran across digital residential screens targeting neighbourhoods with higher volumes of new Ontarians and as an article series with *The Globe and Mail*.

Limitless Media is positioned to bring more of those ideas to life, allowing Initiative to explore experiential activations, unconventional media placements and branded product creation, expanding the sandbox their planners work within.

The results? Along with a plethora of other recent awards (AOY Media Campaign of the Year, gold CMA for innovative media, silver CMA for engagement, eight Media Innovation Awards, and WARC's Top 50), the agency has drummed up new client wins including Destination Ontario, Foodland Ontario, theScore Bet, Properly and Clutch.ca.





**Left:** The goal of Covenant House's "Shoppable Girls" campaign was to increase awareness of sex trafficking and its warning signs. To bring this issue out from the shadows, a traditional retail campaign was created in which young women appeared as the merchandise. Media Experts won a Bronze Lion for the campaign at Cannes.

Canada incredibly well and gives us a stronger ability to help our clients understand people."

Media Experts' Vancouver office rode a wave of momentum in 2021, winning Alberta's ATB Financial and Specsavers Canada, a UK-based eyewear company that launched in B.C. with country-wide expansion plans.

As part of that campaign, the agency created the Specsavers "Closer Look" integration during Vancouver Canucks broadcasts on Rogers Sportsnet. Shown during high-drama moments including coaches' challenges and goal reviews, the integration put the focus on seeing clearly to get the right call delivered. The clever brand alignment resulted in large awareness gains for the brand, says Davis.

Client Sabra Canada, meanwhile, was a major player in hummus, but faced the challenge that the category wasn't growing beyond its traditional consumer base and was losing penetration to other snacking options.

The strategy was to tap into TikTok, which had captured the eyes of young Canadians during COVID-19. "We leaned

into this, getting audiences to rethink hummus, considering it as a snack food instead of a dip or condiment," he says.

Studying the behavior of TikTok users, Media Experts noted that they snacked while engaged with the platform, and combined those moments in the TikTok Forever Dipping influencer campaign as a way of reaching new audiences with new ways to think of Sabra.

It created "snackable" moments that matter with TikTok creators including *Canada's Drag Race* winner Priyanka, who had audiences Sabra wanted to reach. The campaign drove 3.5 times higher ad recall and three times higher brand awareness than TikTok benchmarks and drove a significant lift in favourability.

## An audience-tailored approach to brand and client growth

Media Experts is forging meaningful consumer connections with its footprint in the three major markets

### **MEDIA EXPERTS HAS ENJOYED 41 YEARS OF SUCCESS**

as a media buying and planning agency because it has always put its audience first, according to Kris Davis, head of strategy, SVP, client business partner.

While the industry can get distracted by new ways of doing things, Media Expert's main goal is to make meaningful connections with the audiences that matter to its clients, he says.

Founded in Montreal in 1981, the over-200-strong company has offices in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, which Davis says is rare in an industry that "tends to have an urban Toronto view of things." Having a presence in the country's three biggest cities "allows us to understand

When client BMW was challenged by a lack of electric cars in dealerships due to supply chain issues, Media Experts took a deep dive into its audience and came up with the insight that customers are increasingly comfortable making big purchases online. The agency then figured it could bring the showroom to customers, partnering with Facebook to create an immersive augmented reality filter providing viewers 360-degree views from home.

The agency delivered a similar Canadian-first execution with the Fire TV streaming device. Users could take a tour of the electric BMW iX and use their remotes to learn more about its features. The campaign drove a 791% year-over-year increase in handraisers for the iX and i4 models.

Last year, Media Experts won several awards for its “Shoppable Girls” campaign for child care agency Covenant House, including a Bronze Media Lion at Cannes, shared with Taxi. The campaign aimed to educate young people on human trafficking through a bait-and-switch ecommerce platform and a website including survivor stories and warning signs.

Media Experts is building on its history of innovating and adapting to client needs by expanding its business intelligence and audience analytics practice. “We have been exploring robotic and intelligent process automation to help maintain high standards of operational quality while driving scalability and competitive pricing,” Davis explains. It is also eyeing opportunities involving AR, VR and the metaverse, and is using virtual workrooms to collaborate with peers and clients in an elevated way.

Davis points to Media Experts’ management team as one of its greatest strengths, consisting of a dozen members with a combined 200 years at the agency – consistency that is rare in the industry.

Meanwhile, he says clients are focused on DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion) and are asking what they should be doing and where they should be investing. He explains that the agency’s diverse workforce — representative of the country’s population and speaking 14 languages — helps the agency connect with traditionally underserved audiences.

Media Experts is part of the Mediabrands network. “We are a nimble entrepreneurial agency with access to global resources,” Davis says. “That gives us flexibility to do things in a way that’s right for our clients. That’s always been fundamental to what we do.”

1



2



3



1 Media Experts saw an opportunity to up Sabra’s brand presence on TikTok to reach a new target audience during the pandemic and connect in snackable moments. This led to a collaboration with popular content creators including *Canada’s Drag Race* winner Priyanka. The campaign drove 3.5 times higher ad recall and three times higher brand awareness than TikTok benchmarks. 2 As a part of Specsavers’ campaign launch, Media Experts created new media space on Sportsnet Vancouver Canucks broadcasts. Specsavers’ “Closer Look” graphic was integrated into moments of intense audience engagement, such as coaches’ challenges and goal reviews. 3 In response to the lack of cars in BMW showrooms, Media Experts partnered with Fire TV to bring virtual showrooms to consumers’ living rooms. Via their remotes, users were able to take a 360-degree tour of the new all-electric BMW iX and learn more about its features.



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## One team, one mission

One Twenty Three West pegs back-to-back AOY wins on a collaborative culture focused on brand transformation

### IF YOU ASK ONE TWENTY THREE WEST FOUNDER

**AND CEO/PRESIDENT** Scot Keith why his team has been recognized as Canada's Small Agency of the Year for the past two years, he'll tell you it's no mystery. It's his people.

He sums it up with what he calls a "one team, one dream" approach. All the agency staff, no matter if they are in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, or Edmonton, are on the same team. There are no departments in the self-described indie "idea and design collective." There are no barriers, no fiefdoms. There's only a single team, pulling in one direction.

"We've done everything we can to remove barriers to collaboration," says Keith. "An art director is an art director. A writer is a writer. An account person is an account person. But it only works if everyone understands the final goal and how you're going to collaborate."

And don't expect the lavish trappings of agency life, either. Since it was founded in a Vancouver garage in 2013, One Twenty Three West has stayed true to its humble roots, preferring to keep the overhead low and invest in senior talent instead.

"Most agencies are like a pyramid," describes Keith. "There are a handful of very experienced people at the top, and then there are people with one-to-five-years experience learning the ropes at the bottom. We flipped the pyramid. The vast majority of our team is very experienced." One Twenty Three West has 15 creative directors who actually do the client work.

Keith says the agency has a similarly collaborative relationship with clients, bringing them in early to help shape

**Left:** A series of animated LinkedIn posts brought the values of One Twenty Three West to life and stoked conversations on key industry issues.

the direction of a project and decide how to best drive business. The better the relationship with its clients, he notes, the better the work.

One Twenty Three West has become known as an expert at brand transformations, helping companies modernize or accelerate their brands. It has worked with multiple clients that have gone on to be valued at \$1B+ – the latest being San Francisco-based payroll and compliance company Deel, for which the agency tackled brand strategy and marcom to increase awareness of the brand in advance of a funding announcement.

The agency worked with multiple stakeholders across the US, Canada, the UK and Turkey to craft a one-minute brand video for social media and paid digital platforms. It drove significant brand awareness and traffic in terms of number of visits and the diversity of locations across the world. It's currently doing the same for Vancouver geolocation security and compliance company GeoComply.

"Groups are coming to us because they've got a complicated story to tell and need smart, creative people to tell it," says Keith. "We're perfectly suited

to help them grow because we've invested in some amazing strategic planners such as Colin Carroll [Group Strategy Director] and Jared Gill [Strategy Director]. Everything starts at strategy. Then, we're all in as one team to figure out the overall messaging so we can transform the brand at each touch point."

The agency has added many other new clients, including the BC Children's Hospital Foundation, Breast Cancer Society of Canada, Calgary Airport, Chartered Professional Accountants British Columbia, HelloFresh, Indigenous Tourism BC, and Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority.

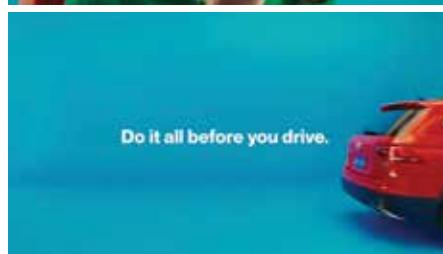
One Twenty Three West's own transformation has seen it recently add 10 staff across strategy, digital, creative and account management, bringing its roster to over 50 – which will prevent it from attempting a three-peat as Small Agency of the Year.

"We had to get a bit bigger to get even better," Keith says. "You have to grow to attract the best people – and we're at this really good size right now where we can compete with anybody."

Just don't expect the expense accounts to get any bigger or the reins to get any tighter.

"In our business, if you try to micromanage everything with a small executive team you can't grow," sums Keith. "You have to bring in the right people, and they have to be properly on-boarded to understand our culture and how we work."

"It's been great. I'm having more fun than ever right now, because it's very busy but I've got all people whom I absolutely trust."



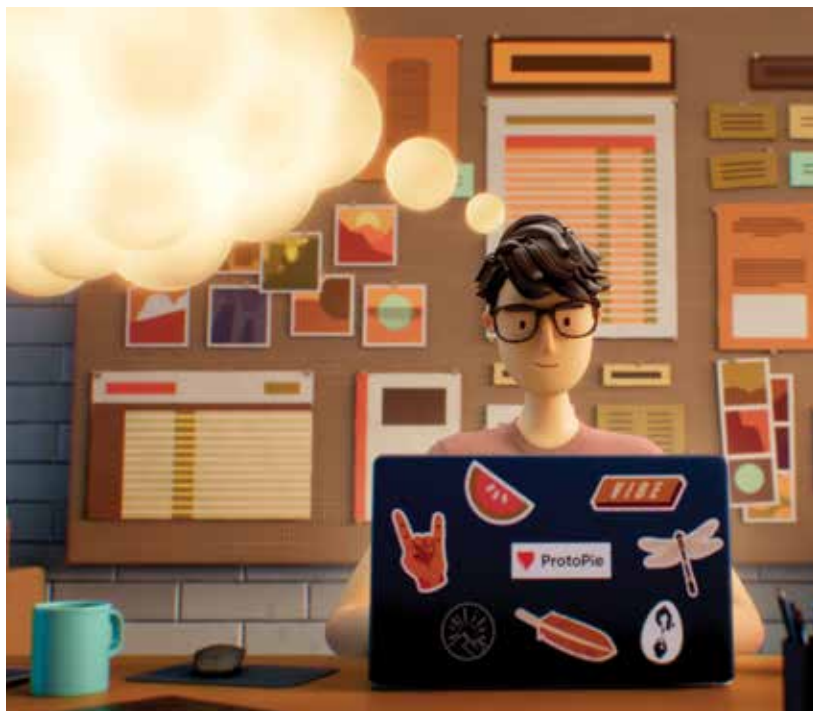
**Left: 1** Troll Co. Clothing asked One Twenty Three West to help launch Five Nine, a bourbon whiskey targeted at its blue-collar target demo. As part of the brand identity work, the shop created a brand platform, name, logo, full product packaging suite, brand guidelines and social media campaign. **2** The idea behind CAA's "Before You Drive" campaign was a poll that showed nearly eight in 10 Canadian drivers admitted to being distracted while driving. To tackle the issue, One Twenty Three West and CAA encouraged drivers to get all their distractions out of the way before heading out. **3** Athletics Canada's new brand was one people could rally behind, as One Twenty Three West created a new brand design for Team Canada for the Tokyo Olympics. The execution titled "The Time is Now" centred around a new logo that captured the maple leaf, the podium, the torch and other key Olympic elements. **4** Real Canadian Superstore wanted to tell stories of real Canadians of all backgrounds, and so called on One Twenty Three West to bump up its strategy and create new design systems, brand campaigns and customer connection points. Beyond broadcast, the campaign features an OOH takeover showcasing 10 Canadians and the wide variety of products in their carts.



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# All-or-nothing approach to brand realization

Zerotrillion's SweetChops and Veld startups exemplify an entrepreneurial spirit to which clients can relate



**Top:** Zerotrillion was tasked with developing Seoul-based prototyping software company ProtoPie's first brand campaign. The insight was that ideas in your head are worthless until you turn them into a prototype. A high-quality animated short was crafted and supported with a paid-media campaign. **Right: 1 & 2** For the CNIB Foundation (Canadian National Institute for the Blind), Zerotrillion used raised-polymer printing to create an inclusive visual identity in Braille that can be read by the visually impaired. The campaign received a dozen international honours. **3** A one-hour special featuring Alessia Cara launching her new album at Niagara Falls paid off with multiple networks airing the content and earned Niagara Falls Tourism 240.7 million impressions. **4** With interprovincial travel discouraged during the pandemic, the agency produced two spots convincing Ontarians to consider well-worn Niagara Falls as an exciting destination. The spots showed people in the afterglow of trips to the Falls, and led to a massive increase over even pre-pandemic booking levels. **5** For former cannabis client Flowr, Zerotrillion created a brand film to show that stigmas around cannabis use remain despite the fact the product is now legal in Canada. The campaign won the Grand Prix at the Clio Cannabis Awards and 10 more Clios.



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**THERE'S A METHOD TO THE MADNESS IN** naming an agency Zerotrillion, says CEO Alex Paquin.

"It's a promise to our clients that in everything we do we'll aim for a trillion, because giving you anything less is giving you zero," he says. "And it's a reminder to ourselves that this is not a place where we aim for a middle – it's all or nothing in the work we do."

Paquin, former CEO of Nomads Agency in Amsterdam, launched Zerotrillion in 2019 in Toronto and Amsterdam with former Nomads creative director Adam Fierman, Canadian actors Robbie Amell (*The Flash*) and Italia Ricci (*Designated Survivor*) and producer Simon Devenyi. The creative agency opened a New York office in March.

Zerotrillion's wide-ranging offerings include brand strategy and design, advertising, and public relations.

Amid the pandemic, Zerotrillion used its all-or-nothing approach to full effect with client Niagara Falls Tourism.

Instead of a conventional campaign with the predictable message "Come to Niagara Falls when the





pandemic's over," Zerotrillion used the media budget to produce an Alessia Cara concert in Niagara Falls and offer the content – valuable when little was being produced – to the highest bidder.

The one-hour special *Alessia Cara Live from Niagara Falls* was filmed at five Niagara Falls locales and broadcast on CTV and MTV around the world. Also, the Grammy Award winner's live performance of "Sweet Dream" on a Niagara City Cruises vessel aired on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* last July.

"The strategy was, 'Let's offer something inherently entertaining, and then Stephen Colbert will want it,'" Paquin says. The notion was the Colbert show would draw more viewers than a conventional Niagara Falls Tourism ad on YouTube.

The content earned 240.7 million impressions for a campaign that, according to Paquin, had a media budget that would have normally allowed for 3 or 4 million. It reached 98 million households, gaining 61.7 million impressions in media coverage from news outlets and 92.5 million social media impressions. Niagara Falls hotels had twice as many bookings during the broadcast period than pre-pandemic.

The special took home gold in the branded documentary category at the New York Festivals TV & Film Awards and won the music and entertainment prize at The Drum Awards in the U.K.

Paquin says that as a young agency, Zerotrillion aims to work with clients "on the forefront of the big ideas of our time."

These, he adds, include companies in cannabis, cryptocurrency, blockchain, autonomous robotics – "anything where we have the opportunity to help big thinkers, dreamers and doers make their ideas happen. Everything we work on has a futuristic slant."

One example sees Zerotrillion doing brand, strategy, creative and comm services work for Cartken, a Silicon Valley autonomous delivery robotics firm.

It's also working for cannabis producer Organigram, and on a first campaign for Florida-based Green Gruff, which makes all-natural dog supplements with and without CBD.

As AOR for crypto firm FRNT Financial, Zerotrillion marketed the company's IPO, created its brand, and has done PR, website design and campaign work. It's also doing brand, advertising and PR work for blockchain tech giant nChain.

In addition to its client gigs, Zerotrillion is developing creative entrepreneurial ventures, which Paquin says resonates with clients. "They see us treating their money the way we treat our own money in our ventures," he says.

In Toronto, the agency created a plant-based restaurant concept called SweetChops and brought on *Top Chef Canada: All-Stars* finalist Dustin Gallagher to create a menu from scratch. To prove the concept worked, it ran a pilot kitchen for six months in Toronto. It's also partnered with Adam Gilbert, former VP marketing at Pickle Barrel Restaurants, and is raising money to open nine SweetChops locations in the U.S.

Meanwhile, Zerotrillion has launched Veld – a sustainable, high-end leisure wear brand designed by its Amsterdam creative team and handmade in Portugal with 100% organic cotton.

Says Paquin, "Something that works well in our favour is we can look a CEO in the eyes and say, 'We know what it's like spending money you raised to build a business, and needing to be accountable for every dollar you spend.'"

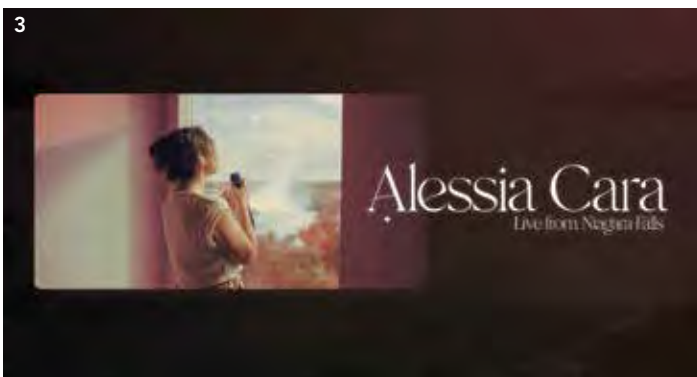
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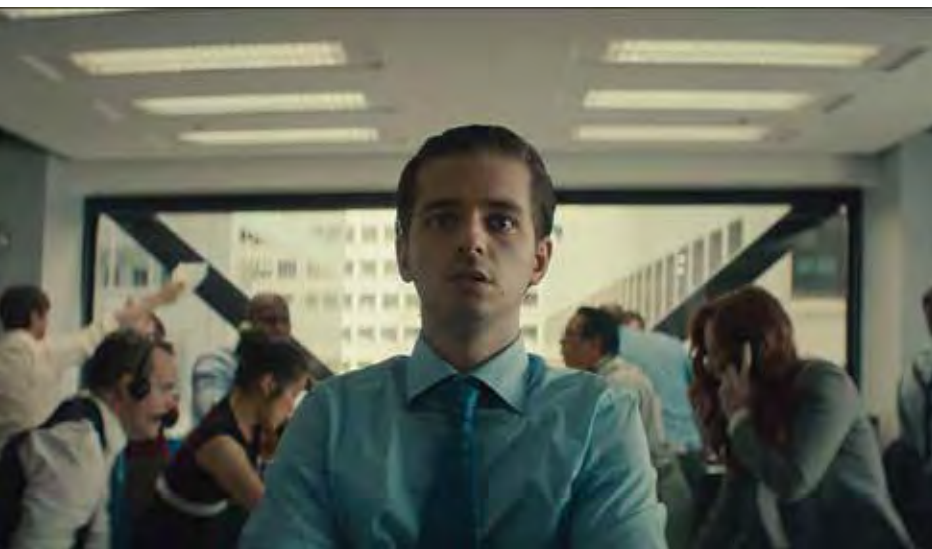


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# Redesigning the consumer-brand relationship

Leo Burnett Canada transitions to creative consultancy to amp up clients' commercial power



**SOMETIMES EVEN THE MOST SUCCESSFUL** brands need to hit “refresh.”

Just ask Leo Burnett Canada president Ben Tarr, who has taken the agency through a redesign and transformation from advertising agency to creative consultancy.

“We see it as an important move to best service our clients and use our creativity capabilities to their maximum potential,” he says.

Located in Toronto with a staff of 170, Leo Burnett is well known for its advertising chops, but its transformation has involved a rethink of how the agency executes for clients and how brands can engage with customers in ways that will create stronger relationships with them and outperform the competition.

“It’s important to move beyond only advertising,” he says. “Creativity has the power to transform human behaviour and comes in many forms. It’s about harnessing that creative power and turning it into commercial power for our clients.”

A key element of the transformation is *The HumanKind Study*, proprietary research done in 2021 to gauge how consumers interact with brands. “It was a deep dive into what people are facing, what people are feeling, and how brands are – or are not – playing a positive role in their lives,” Tarr explains.

Among the study’s findings was that one in three Canadians said their mental health and wellbeing was at an all-time low due to the pandemic, and 76 per cent of Canadians do not believe brands understand their problems. With these insights in mind, Leo Burnett asked: How can brands develop products, services, and ideas that have a positive impact and help create change?

**Above:** TD’s Super Bowl spot for its TD Easy Trade app features a young man overwhelmed by the thought of investing until a friend shows him how the app makes it simple.

*The HumanKind Study* informed a new approach and presented an opportunity for its clients to go beyond transactional customer relationships.

*The HumanKind* insights have already had an impact for some brands working with Leo Burnett. For the Kellogg’s Vector brand, which aims to get people active, the agency created sports merchandise from old sofas. The “Off the Couch Bags” represent a new way for the brand to engage with its customers, upcycling materials instead of using resources to generate new materials.

Leo Burnett also worked with Campbell’s on a campaign focused on finding new uses for pantry staples like its line of broths. To engage a younger demographic, the agency created “Brothtails,” cocktails made with its broth products. Tarr says both campaigns drove significant performance from both a brand and commercial perspective.

As a creative consultancy with research-backed strategies, Leo Burnett has already secured a slate of new clients, awards, and new service offerings. Recently chosen as AOR for Campari’s Forty Creek whisky and the *Toronto Star*, it also helped launch NorthStar Gaming’s sports site and picked up Cadillac, adding to its Buick and GMC roster of GM brands.

Its work made it the most-awarded Canadian competitor at the 2021 London International Awards, and it has received further recognition at the recent Cannes Lions, One Show and Effie Awards.

With its redesign, Leo Burnett has developed a new creative product called Think Forward to help clients look ahead to the next three to five years. “It’s about testing and learning and spending time with customers to develop business cases we can take forward into the world,” Tarr says.

Leo Burnett also has added senior brain power to its strategic team, which Tarr sees as crucial “because it’s not just about brand strategy now – it’s about strategy that pushes creativity in all forms.”

Over the past few years, Leo Burnett has made a commitment to diversity and inclusion in everything it does. Among the changes has been the creation of a “Black Pencil Fund” – an annual commitment to BIPOC scholarships, partnering with educators supporting the marketing industry.

At the heart of Leo Burnett’s success is its talent, says Tarr, and its people-first approach to building a strong culture has enabled it to deliver even stronger work for its clients. With an engaged, innovative team encouraged to rethink traditional approaches, the agency believes it is harnessing the power of its talent to help clients “Think Forward.”



**Left: 1** For Kellogg's Vector, Leo Burnett created Off the Couch Bags, a line of sports bags made from couch materials to inspire Canadians to get out of their seats and back into sports activities. **2** To reach a younger demographic, Leo Burnett created "Brothtails" using leftovers of Campbell's broth as a cocktail ingredient. **3** Bell technicians got a workout alongside athletes training for the Olympics in humorous spots extolling the benefits of the telecom's 5G network. **4** Launched this year, Leo Burnett's *The HumanKind Study* identifies challenges preoccupying Canadians and provides insight on how brands can help solve them.



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## A long-term view

Dentsu Canada offers integrated strategies and solutions for better business and a better world

### CLIENTS ARE SEEKING AGENCIES THAT OFFER INTEGRATED

solutions, not just services, and they want a long-term view on marketing strategy, says Stephen Kiely, Dentsu Canada's CEO. And that, he adds, is just what they'll get with Dentsu Canada.

The shop is a 360° agency within a vast global network incorporating expertise in creativity, media and customer experience management (CXM) focused toward brand and business growth and, just as importantly, the greater good. Dentsu's international leadership brands include Dentsu Creative, Carat, iProspect, dentsu X and Merkle. With offices in Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary, Dentsu Canada counts 1,200 employees.

Kiely, who was tapped as CEO in April, has led the development of campaigns for Toyota, Lexus, Canon, Uniqlo and Subway during his 18-year Dentsu career, originally joining the media group before moving onto the creative side.

He says the agency's recent wins and continued growth with existing clients is proof it is heading in the right direction. Following a global review, Dentsu continues to handle media buying for Labatt Breweries, while new business includes Manulife, Metrolinx, and Sherwin-Williams.

Dentsu won more than 30 Canadian awards last year and garnered international kudos, including a London International Award for campaign work for Dyslexia Canada.

To draw attention to the challenges faced by those with the disorder, Dyslexia Canada and Dentsu created the "Trouble with Words" campaign to leverage the popularity of online game Wordle. The campaign set out to show there is nothing

**Left:** The #TapeOutHate campaign by Budweiser Canada and the Hockey Diversity Alliance used hockey tape to ignite a movement to eradicate racism in hockey by spotlighting the real experiences of professional players and calling on fans to take action. Dentsu delivered upon a strategic media plan that led to #TapeOutHate trending to number one on Twitter within a few hours of launching.

fun about struggling with word challenges for the millions of Canadians with dyslexia.

The multimedia campaign included misspelled URLs such as "wrdole.com" and "wodrel.ca" as well as banner and social ads with hard-to-read 30-character headlines that fit the 5 x 6 Wordle game grid. Users were driven to itshardtoread.org, an immersive experiential website that sensitizes Canadians to what it's like to live with a reading challenge.

For Budweiser Canada and the Hockey Diversity Alliance, Dentsu ignited a movement to eradicate racism in hockey by spotlighting real experiences of pro hockey players and calling on fans to take action. As part of #TapeOutHate, hockey tape was used to amplify and deliver the message.

A strategic media plan led to #TapeOutHate trending at number one on Twitter within hours. Five hours after launch, more than 20,000 rolls of hockey tape sold out online. The media campaign generated 75 million paid impressions and more

than 2.7 million paid video views.

Just as clients and consumers want to see positive change in the world, Dentsu Canada is applying that lens to both its company culture and that of the industry as a whole.

Over the past year, it has deployed a company-wide DEI strategy led by Marème Touré, VP, diversity, equity and inclusion. "We aspire to be a force for good in Canada's advertising and media industry, [where] top talent from diverse backgrounds can bring their most authentic selves to work and thrive," she says.

The agency published the report *Together We Thrive*, an industry-first DEI deep dive into the Canadian market. It also launched the Your Turn at Dentsu mentorship program to provide access to leadership and career-pathing opportunities for racialized/BIPOC employees.

Within its own company, Dentsu set up listening circles where employees were encouraged to share experiences. To get employees involved and provide them continued support, BRG (business resource groups) communities were launched, including Parents, Pride, and Interfaith.

Dentsu Canada's Anti-Racism Action Plan is aimed at being an internal agent of change by raising awareness, taking on key DEI projects and creating a speaker series to present inspirational learning opportunities.

Kiely is driven by the belief that "a single idea can change business and the world for the better. As CEO, I want to continue to nurture a business and workplace culture of collaboration to create high-value solutions, measurable impact and business results."

1



2



3



4



5



**Left: 1** Heinz partnered with Waze to utilize its app's built-in navigation and speed-tracking system to target Canadians stuck in traffic. And if traffic went at the speed of ketchup, Heinz rewarded them with free product. Dentsu brought attention to the campaign through video on social, ads on Spotify and on digital OOH boards informing drivers how to unlock the offer. **2** To help IKEA sell mattresses and other sleep-related products to sleep-deprived new parents, Dentsu identified listeners of Spotify's popular sleep playlists for babies. Placements were bought and ads created matching the playlists' tone with ambient sounds and whispered VO from Ikea spokesperson Jonas.

**3** Dentsu's work is sometimes about more than supporting a brand or selling a product. Sometimes it's about helping build a movement. Case in point is its support of the BlackNorth Initiative, which aims to mobilize corporate Canada to eradicate systemic anti-Black racism. **4 & 5** When you're dyslexic, no story is simple. Dyslexia Canada wanted to raise awareness about what it means to suffer from the condition, so Dentsu created experiential website [itshardtoread.org](http://itshardtoread.org).



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# A grander vision

Pomp & Circumstance launches new offshoots and capabilities on its path of global expansion



## YOU MIGHT NOT EVEN RECOGNIZE

Toronto-based Pomp & Circumstance anymore.

Although PR remains a core competency, Pomp is much more than the agency it was before the pandemic. In the last two years it has more than doubled to a staff of 28. And in the last year it has added clients including SkipTheDishes, Peroni, Nobis, Bayview Village and Buffalo Jeans.

And then there's the expansion with Bonus Track – Pomp's new, full-service creative arm set to deliver content creation, media planning and buying, branding and strategy, as well as plenty more in the influencer and social media spaces.

Then check out Pomp Postcard – a consumer travel guide curated by Pomp employees that tells you how you can spend three perfect days in cool places around the world.

"The spirit of travel has been a part of our DNA since the beginning," explains CD and co-founder Lindsay Mattick. "Seeing the most interesting places, newest hotels, restaurants and cultural experiences help us bring fresh ideas to our clients." Every year Pomp picks one staffer and sends them on a trip of a lifetime – the agency's way of feeding inspiration. All they ask in return is a postcard.

So, how do these newest offerings fit into the Pomp playbook?

"Our guiding ethos when we started was, 'what is grand?'" says president and co-founder Amanda Alvaro. "It was our

**Above:** Simplii Financial and Pomp & Circumstance created the #SimpliiSideHustle panel in time for International Women's Day, featuring female entrepreneurs sharing thoughts on opportunities to earn money outside of day jobs.

compass. If we pursue grand ideas that are smart, creative, and breakthrough, we'll attract the best people and clients.

"Bonus Track and Postcard both have that spirit. How do we go further than what people have asked of us? How do we push ourselves to deliver things that are going to really break through – not just in Canada, but globally?"

Pomp fully intends to become a one-stop shop for clients worldwide. In the last year, it found itself fielding more requests for creative services and decided to answer the call.

"It was about challenging ourselves to push the envelope and allow the brands we work with to really break through," Mattick says. "Now they can come to us and get a full-range expertise."

Pomp can now handle everything from initial branding to beyond – with a fully integrated PR strategy, of course. Its leaders say it can operate nimbly in multiple channels and make the most of tight budgets.

The underlying client service philosophy, says Mattick, is that "the agency team you're working with has to be an extension of yourself. And part of that is knowing your agency partner is going to recommend the best ideas – not just the ones they can execute in-house."

You can see some of those ideas at work for Simplii Financial – for which Pomp now oversees all PR strategy and creative development, campaign launches and ongoing media and influencer relations.

Pomp recently helped CIBC's digital banking brand Simplii Financial lean into the zeitgeist. With so much talk about the "Great Resignation" and people starting side gigs, the client wanted to join the conversation. For International Women's Day, Pomp created a campaign called 'Simplii Side Hustle' that shone the spotlight on

female Canadian entrepreneurs, talking to them about their experiences building their side businesses. Driven by video and PR, it performed better than expected.

Pomp supported new client SkipTheDishes with several launches and signature campaigns – including rolling out a Snoop Dogg hot dog truck timed with the brand's Super Bowl campaign. It also tackled campaigns and influencer programs for National Pet Day in support of Skip Express Lane.

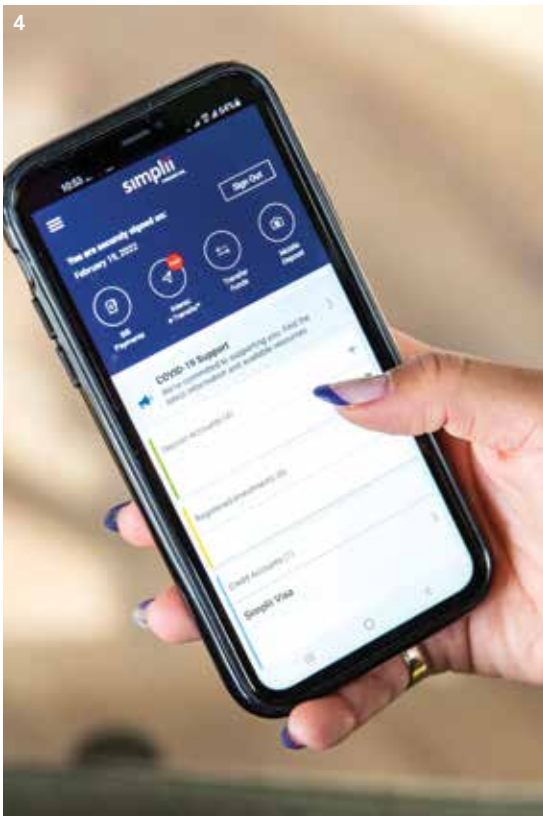
While this much rapid growth might be intimidating to some agencies, Pomp isn't backing down.

"Change doesn't scare us," says Alvaro. "Change exhilarates us. We're not 'status quo' people. The idea of bringing new competencies, people, and ideas to the agency is thrilling for us."

"We didn't start off to be a small agency. We started off to be a global agency, and we're right on track."



**Below: 1** Pomp worked with SkipTheDishes to support its Snoop Dogg Super Bowl campaign last year. That included a decked-out pop-up cart in Toronto that gave away free hot dogs. The rap icon has started his own brand – Snoop Doggs – so it only made sense to think about a sausage-based play.



**Above: 2 & 3** Pomp was appointed PR AOR for the Park Hyatt Toronto in 2020 – just in time to oversee the re-opening of the fully-restored luxury hotel. Pomp handles PR for the brand, also offering strategic counsel, and media and influencer relations – and has gone on to advise on other international openings. **Left: 4** After working with Pomp on a project-by-project basis, Simplii Financial appointed the firm as its AOR at the start of this year, overseeing all PR strategy, creative development, campaign launches and ongoing media and influencer relations.



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# Finding meaningful connections

Deeper client relationships allow Elemental to go far beyond the brief



**FOR THOSE PREPARED TO SEIZE THE** moment, adversity often brings unexpected opportunity. Elemental is a perfect example.

Not only did the Toronto-based agency decide that a global pandemic was the perfect time to take on US clients, but it also chose that moment for reflection.

"One of the big things we looked at during the pandemic was our brand – trying to refine and define who we are," recalls partner and head of strategy Dustin Brown.

"We landed on Elemental as the 'human connections' agency. When everyone felt disconnected, our focus remained on creating connections between brands and customers. That's universal across everything we do."

A human connection is a richer, more purposeful relationship," says Elemental partner and founder Brent Wardrop. "Drawing on the loyalty capabilities we've acquired – working with Starbucks Rewards and growing the Scene loyalty program over the past 10 years from 1.8 million to over 13 million members – we strive to manifest committed relationships between our clients and their customers. We build human connections."

Founded in 2000, Elemental's expertise, says Brown, is its ability to meaningfully hone in on those moments of meaningful connection, producing work that helps refine brands but which can also speak truthfully to consumers.

Those insights don't come easily, but Elemental is willing to put in the work. For Baffin Boots, understanding the consumer

**Above:** To capture Tilda's rich history and the journey from the rice paddies to Canadian kitchens, Elemental created the "Rice, perfected" campaign, using the connections that highlight the process, the people, and the places behind Tilda Basmati.

experience had the team strapping on new Baffins and getting out for a winter hike and clipping into cross-country skis.

It was all about building the relationship with the client and living the brand. "It gave us a chance to get out of the boardroom – and all those manufactured moments boardrooms can lead to – and see how their products are used," Brown adds. "That became our jumping off point."

But not every problem can be solved with a hike. So the agency will gather the client and the entire team in a room for a "Briefstorm" to work through the challenges and opportunities of the remit. It's a chance for all ideas to be heard and results in a brief and a creative approach that speaks to the client's needs.

"Nobody likes a surprise party," adds Brown. "The old way of thinking you're going to go create something, present it to the client and nail it doesn't work. In fact, we're trying to get away from that whole idea that everything you show needs to be in its final format and get into more of a relationship with clients. Sometimes that's about sharing imperfections to get to better places."

Elemental has been busy. In the last year it has added clients Bitbuy, Minute Rice, Olivieri and Tilda Rice in Canada, as well as US work for Italian spirits maker Gruppo Montenegro and Rice Select.

Getting deeper insights has paid off in projects such as "Rice, perfected" for Tilda. To capture the company's rich history, Elemental used illustrated tapestry designs highlighting the process, people and places that make Tilda Basmati possible. Launching

last September and running until the holidays, the online and print campaign increased Tilda's social followers by over 70%.

"There's a difference in the tone and narrative that comes out in a Briefstorm," Brown says. "That's especially true when we're working with a new client. We can hear their ambitions and what they want to achieve, not just this year but beyond. If we're only doing the brief in front of us, we're not doing enough. We're investing in our team to give them the time to be thoughtful."

And so Elemental will add seven staff this year – growing the team to about 25, and then to 30+ next year.

"Where we add the most value is in strategy and creative," sums up Brown. "That's the nucleus of what we do – scaling in a way that allows a team to move into those important moments with our clients."





**Above: 1** To get a feel for the footwear made by client Baffin Boots, Elemental got out into the snow for a test run. Pictured are Elemental's Dustin Brown and Baffin SVP Mark Hubner. **2** To create awareness of the plight of North Atlantic right whales, Oceana tasked Elemental to rally Canadians to petition the government to protect these magnificent creatures. **3** For Amaro Montenegro, Elemental launched "One Spirit, Endless Possibilities" in 2021, featuring an all-new look and feel, seasonal campaigns, new e-commerce platforms and activation creative. **4** For Recycle BC, Elemental wanted to remind the province that good recycling doesn't go unnoticed. The "BC Says Thanks" campaign took a positive approach by letting the environment relay its gratitude to recyclers. Through humorous TV spots, digital ads and OOH placements, the campaign showed the flora, fauna and landscape cheering on recyclers.



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# Solutions designed for good

Anomaly's broad scope and value-based approach allows it to innovate for brands – and maybe improve the world



**Top:** To drive awareness of Canada's pollution problem, Anomaly and Corona Canada partnered with the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup and prop stylist Caitlin Doherty to create life-sized beachgoers made entirely of locally collected plastic pollution.

**Right: 1** The agency is bringing awareness to Amazon's employment policies and efforts by promoting the company's industry-leading pay and benefits, investment in employee growth, and national economic impact.

**2** Started by BIPOC Anomaly employees, Equal Advantage provides pro bono agency services to BIPOC-owned businesses. As part of the program, the agency developed clothing brand Isrealla Kobla's brand strategy, including a new visual identity and brand book.

**3** #TapeOutHate, a campaign in partnership with Budweiser Canada and the Hockey Diversity Alliance, ignited a movement to eradicate racism in hockey, both on and off the ice. **4** In partnership with Bud Light Canada, the agency helped produce *Underplayed*, a documentary bringing attention to gender inequality in the music industry. **5** In 2015 Anomaly Toronto established a partnership with Pencils of Promise, a global education charity building schools and leading student health and teacher training programs in communities around the world with the goal of education and literacy for all.



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## AS IT HITS THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF

its Canadian launch, Anomaly remains true to its name. But the "difficult to define" organization makes one thing clear: it is not an advertising agency. "We're more of a creative company," explains Candace Borland, Anomaly's partner and president in Canada.

The agency embraces a value-based (no billable hours) approach to its products and services, with an emphasis on doing whatever it takes to address and solve a business problem. "We are driven by effectiveness," Borland emphasizes. "We have a strategic underpinning as an agency, and we surround the business problem with people we think will have an interesting perspective and are well-positioned to solve it."

That means each pitch and approach to an RFP or client request is bespoke, and can be handled by the 85-strong Toronto agency



with its scope spanning advertising, marketing, communications, and creative business and brand solutions.

This is where impactful ideas find their roots, such as the "4:25" campaign for Hershey's – which capitalized on cannabis legalization, creating a bar specially formulated for the intense hunger that hits five minutes after 4:20 – and the Budweiser Red Light that would come on when the user's favorite team scored, and which had a giant version placed at the North Pole for the World Cup of Hockey. These creative solutions go way beyond traditional models.

Dave Douglass, partner and executive creative director, says those types of solutions set the bar "and we're constantly trying to top ourselves."

He says he wants to foster an environment where everyone feels they can bring any idea forward and the best idea wins. "It's also about ideas that are for good and designed to change things for the better," he adds.

Branded content can provide such an opportunity, such as Bud Light Canada's *Underplayed* documentary production, which focuses more on shedding light on the gender inequality in the music space than it does on selling beer, all while addressing the brand's challenge in being relevant for younger female beer drinkers.

The #TapeOutHate initiative between Budweiser and the Hockey Diversity Alliance was a call to action to "tape out" racism with the beer brand using its platform to drive home the message that hockey is for everyone.

Those ideas require more than just creativity. It's why the entire Anomaly model exists. Identify the problem, get the right people in the room, find the right solution, and activate it, budget be damned. Not every agency is in a position to do that, argues Franke

Rodriguez, partner and CEO of Anomaly in New York, and founder of the Toronto office.

"The biggest challenge the agency industry faces is the downward financial pressure on the [traditional] agency model," Rodriguez says. "Because there are so many agencies in Canada competing for a relatively small pool of clients with scale, too many agencies are willing to do a lot for a little, which hurts the whole industry."

Anomaly's value-based model precludes that pressure. That over-arching operating system and the agency's desire to do good has resulted in major new clients wins including Amazon (US and EMEA), Prime Video (Canada), Capital One (Canada), Unilever (global), K Health (global), Astral Tequila (US), Cavendish Farms (Canada), the Chadwick Boseman Foundation for the Arts, and multiple new Canadian portfolios for Labatt.

It strives to be an agent for change internally as well. While there has been a lot of talk about diversity and inclusion within the communications industry, along with some progress, Borland says it hasn't been nearly enough, and the agency initiated initiatives like "Step In" to facilitate the change people want to see.

"Step In" is an open house for BIPOC talent with less than three years of experience, featuring Anomaly team members ("Anomalies") sharing their perspectives on industry disciplines, and talking one-on-one with young BIPOC professionals.

Given the current macro context, the need for real change has never been greater, and, Borland says, "We are proud to say we are a Canadian agency driving global change and cultural conversation through the clients we take on, the work we do and the programming we initiate and support."





# Designing choice

Camp Jefferson digs deep early to find the killer differentiator



## TO EXPLAIN WHY CAMP JEFFERSON HAS

been an ideal agency partner for almost a decade, Telus' Lise Doucet says it's best to go back to the beginning.

The agency launched as Dare, part of Vision7's European network. Canadian expansion and subsequent acquisition by BlueFocus saw Dare Toronto rebrand as Camp Jefferson, which has 45 staff in Toronto. The agency's underpinnings lie in channel-agnostic strategy, complemented by a technology practice, in-house design, and a strong focus on communications.

Doucet, VP, marketing communications for Telus' Koodo Mobile and Public Mobile, says what became clear at the start of their relationship was that Camp Jefferson was digging deep to understand Koodo's business model and audience.

The agency came to the pitch with "Choose Happy," a message positioning the brand as a source of happiness in an otherwise frustrating mobile world. Bright colors and upbeat images figured in the branding. "And as a brand promise, 'Choose Happy' is still very much alive today," Doucet adds.

Designing choice is the goal, says Peter Bolt, Camp Jefferson's EVP, managing partner. "Everything depends on being chosen: sales, subscriptions, likes, shares, renewals, and referrals," he elaborates. "The KPIs we chase are all the result of people choosing your brand over your competition. But each day, new competitors, technologies, and cultural changes make that choice more complex."

That choice is an ever-present challenge for Doucet and her brands. Just as "Choose Happy" helped Koodo stand apart early on, Camp Jefferson also came up with the "Shock-Free

**Above:** Camp Jefferson's "Glory from Anywhere" campaign for the Canadian Olympic Committee and the 2022 Winter Olympics leans into distinctly Canadian values including respect, bravery, determination, and diversity.

Data" campaign to further differentiate the brand.

Koodo offers the same services as the other price-conscious flanker brands, but what Doucet calls "a simple data notification feature we all have" was reframed as something unique by illustrating how it worked – alerting users about billing thresholds before they happened and saving them money if used correctly. "It became a reason to buy Koodo," she says.

For the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), Camp Jefferson's ability to understand the brand and its goals was more important than ever, starting with the campaign, "Not suicide. Not today."

"They're low on ego, and high on empathy and humility," says Sarah Chamberlin, CAMH Foundation's VP, marketing and donor experience. "They're just very curious humans."

These characteristics are essential to engender the conversations and messaging for which CAMH strives. While that campaign was on deck for early 2020, Camp Jefferson and Chamberlin were sensitive to putting out messaging around suicide when the pandemic first hit.

Their partnership facilitated the nimbleness necessary to postpone that campaign and pivot towards another that featured tools and messaging to help people during COVID-19. The result was "Apart. Not alone," built around media booked for the original campaign, incorporating social video and TV spots, ads in

*The Globe and Mail*, and PR efforts.

The goals and results were twofold. It helped audiences understand what CAMH is, and made them aware of resources available to them. CAMH reports that between this campaign and the ultimately activated "Not suicide. Not today" it was able to help more than 500,000 people.

Internally, Bolt says Camp Jefferson invests in the whole person, not just the employee, providing developmental and learning opportunities, along with an environment – virtual or IRL – that is inclusive, collaborative, and flexible.

"Growth is why we're all here," he says. "Clients' business growth, certainly; but it's the personal, intellectual, and life growth that keeps people around the same table."

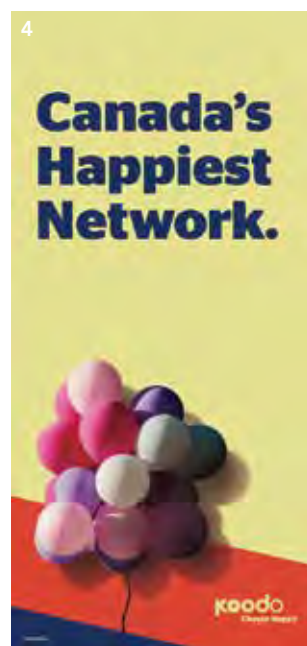
Bolt says one of the best indicators that Camp Jefferson's model works is its "Likelihood to Recommend" scores. Client responses "have stayed at or above 90% since we opened."

"As long as our staff is choosing to stay with us, and our clients would recommend us, then we'll keep focusing on being the greatest source of growth for us all."





**Left and below:** The agency's "Not Suicide. Not today" campaign for CAMH wasn't just about raising awareness and urgency around its main issue; it focused on time and emphasized hope about potential treatments and changes in the way society perceives mental illness and suicide.



**Left: 3** To get NFT buyers, sellers, and advocates to consider the impact of blockchain technology on the environment, the agency created the "Nature Friendly Token" campaign for the David Suzuki Foundation, auctioning off the featured NFT for approximately \$50 billion. It wasn't designed to actually be sold, but to generate awareness around the true cost of NFTs. **4** The "Choose Happy" campaign for Koodo Mobile positioned the brand as a source of happiness in an otherwise frustrating mobile world, helping the carrier stand apart in a crowded field and remaining a brand promise.



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## 100 YEARS OF THE MARKETING AWARDS

The show that never (figuratively) gets old took place on June 15. It marked *strategy* and the industry's return to live, in-person mingling since the before-times. Rethink was a big winner that night, taking home more awards than any other agency.



1. Resident show host Steve Mykolyn tries to make a point while making us laugh. | 2. Former Unilever marketer Sharon MacLeod returns to induct two inaugural Hall of Marketing Gold winners (see #4). | 3. David Goodis, son of Jerry Goodis, accepts the lifetime achievement award on behalf of his late father. | 4. HOMG inductees Nancy Vonk and Janet Kestin embrace during their big moment. | 5. The Craft Best of Show went to Wunderman Thompson and Royal Canadian Legion for an NFT that, finally, has a practical use. | 6. Rethink with Kraft Heinz and their Advertising Best of Show prize. | 7. Performer Cheryl Nelson-Singh was given a standing ovation for her work in SickKids' "Moms vs. Hard Days." | 8. Design co-chair Mo Bofill with Zulu Alpha Kilo after winning a BOS for "Micropedia of Microaggressions." | 9. Rethink's mid-show awards haul. | 10. School Editing praises its "M" award. | 11. Mykolyn bumps elbows with Untitled Films. | 12. Ethnicity Matters basks in Marketing Gold light.

Who are we?  
We're that moment between  
people and your brand.  
We're that What If?  
That Wait, What? double take.  
The Why Not? The Who Is That?  
The Where Do I Get That?  
The How Did I Live Without That?  
We are all that,  
and more.

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