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## NETWORKS REBOOT TV'S MASS STRATEGY



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**ON THE COVER:** Reduce, reuse, rewatch. The notion of what's old is new again seems to be a recurring theme on TV these days, with the nets excitedly resurrecting once-loved shows, favourite stars and familiar formats. This year, they're rebooting *S.W.A.T.*, *Roseanne* and *Dynasty*, and bringing back the *Will & Grace* crew. We just so happened to have the original shows on tape, which photographer Justin Poulsen snapped for our retro cover. The painful reminder of how we used to record shows over memories makes us appreciate the cloud that much more.

# Making TV mass again

**I'**m going to hazard a (sort of calculated) guess that the 1990s are responsible for about two-thirds of "background" shows. This is partly based on a quick scan of a Reddit forum titled, "Those who fall asleep with the TV/Netflix on: what do you like to watch at bedtime?" But I also bring some personal experience to bear on the matter.

To this day, my little sister will use the hyperbolic pronouncements of Will, Grace, Jack and (ironically) Karen to help her slip into REM. My partner's brother frequently PVRs *Married with Children* and *Simpsons* episodes for any meals he spends in front of the TV. I even know someone who learned how to speak English via *Friends* reruns before emigrating from China. True story.

It's no surprise, then, that there's been a "reboot fever" coursing through network veins for the past couple years. Our cover subjects *Will & Grace*, *Roseanne*, *S.W.A.T.* and *Dynasty* are being resurrected for the 2017 fall schedule, adding to the recycling pile that already includes Netflix's *Gilmore Girls* and *Fuller House*, and Showtime's *Twin Peaks*.

These cultural relics are vestiges of a simpler time for many millennials (and to some outside the demo). And I can confirm that reruns of easy-viewing sitcoms I watched growing up are comforting. I used to spend nights watching *Friends* DVDs someone gave me when I first came to Canada, alone and afraid, a decade after its final run.

Johanna Faigelman at Human Branding told me these shows, which we approach with a certain wistfulness, hold a kind of "groundedness and simplicity" that resonates during a time of uncertainty, complexity, and crisis. The group after millennials – gen Z – are also "over-scheduled and over-stressed," she says. "Even for

them there would be an appeal, where there isn't a level of nostalgia but there is that notion of simpler times."

But there's more to these shows than appealing to a cord-cutting cohort's nostalgia. For Canadian networks like Corus, which picked up two of the four remakes, it's a play to make TV mass again. The network's Barbara Williams told *Media in Canada* editor Val Maloney at this year's upfront that conventional was in an identity crises. Part of the network's comeback strategy is to use "big brands that people are familiar with," which have a multi-generational appeal and play to conventional TV's strengths – to be "big, broad, popular."

This also means shows don't have to be novels. The networks are focusing on fewer heavily serialized shows, and instead are opting for less complex storylines like CTV's procedural drama *The Good Doctor* and City's sci-fi comedy *The Orville* to help them differentiate from specialty – which conventional has been emulating as it tried to find itself amidst the segmented confusion, Williams admitted. Because, in the end, a clearer focus for networks (with a wider audience) means a more attractive option for advertisers.

So while the current golden age of television is creating a bit of a content bubble – with an explosion of scripted television creating a saturation of shows, and only so many primetime-viewing hours in a day – it makes sense to resurrect shows with loyal viewers. Some of us are already using them as bed mates, after all.

Jennifer Horn, managing editor



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## SHOW BIZ GETS ITS SHINE ON

By Harmeet Singh and Regan Reid

From hockey to maple syrup to beavers, Canadians love to talk about what makes us...well, us. But when it comes to promoting film and TV that's in our own backyard, we sometimes lean on the humble side. But not anymore – here's a look at how three entertainment brands have cleverly promoted their content to get us to take a closer look at what Cancon has to offer.

## CREATIVITY WINS AT MARKETING

By Jennifer Horn and Kate Wilkinson

**A** cereal box missing half its branding. A fundraiser that mimics a performance brand campaign. A poster that's designed to be destroyed. There's nothing ordinary about the three Marketing Awards winners that stole the show this year, which is why each walked away with a top prize at the gala in June.

The Best of Show and the Best of Public Service both went to Cossette for Honey Nut Cheerios' "Bring Back the Bees" integrated campaign, and SickKids' powerful "VS" creative (respectively).

The "Bring Back the Bees" campaign saw the brand remove its bee mascot from cereal boxes, delivering a 12% lift in sales, while the SickKids anthemic "VS" creative saw the largest donation return in the foundation's history. General Mills Canada was also named Client of the Year for its bravery on the "Bees" work.

Leo Burnett took home a top trophy, in addition to its five Gold Ms, with the Design Best of Show (a first) given to the shop for its work on IKEA's "Cook This Page."

The retailer's campaign stopped shoppers in their tracks with cook-safe parchment paper that mimicked IKEA instructions (but for food).

The Multicultural jury did not dish out a top prize, nor any Golds, for this year's ethnic marketing.

Main jury co-chairs, Zak Mroueh at Zulu Alpha Kilo and Jordan Doucette at Taxi, said they believe Canada's homegrown work should be celebrated more within the country's borders, which is why it's important to recognize the brands that are stepping up and doing things that require bravery with a Best of Show.

Design chair Steve Mykolyn also said it was obvious from the start that there was a Design Best of Show, calling the IKEA piece "a no-brainer" for the top honour.

Lg2 made the most trips to the stage, as the agency brought home a total of 12 Gold M trophies. As in previous years, the jury was particularly impressed by the agency's work for Farnham Ale & Lager and its ongoing "A Bit Bitter" campaign.



### LETTERKENNY BREWS UP SOME MERCH

Who doesn't love some drinkable branded content? The producers of CraveTV's *Letterkenny*, New Metric Media, teamed up with Sudbury's Stack Brewing to create Puppies Premium Lager, the Official Beer of *Letterkenny*, with the hilariously appropriate catchphrase "Who's a good beer?" The idea for the marketing tool came from the writers' room for season three of the comedy and it will be woven into storylines of the show. Series diehards (or beer lovers) can also pick up the cans at LCBOs across Ontario this summer.





## TELEFILM EMBRACES THE VOYEURS IN US ALL

To show that Canadians do indeed enjoy homegrown movies, Telefilm Canada and The Hive tapped into our collective love of watching people's reactions. The "Watch Us, Watch Us" social campaign features seven short online videos that feature a variety of Canadians – from a hockey team to a family of Syrian refugees to Olympians – watching and reacting to Canadian films, including *Breakaway*, *Turbo Kid* and *How to Plan an Orgy in a Small Town*. The first four English-language videos have so far received more than 2,550,000 views.



## TIFF PUTS CONTENT IN CONTEXT

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) debuted "Canada of Screen," a program dedicated to the country's "150 essential moving-images productions." Within the digital catalogue, TIFF included Canada's most iconic advertising, such as Molson's "The Rant" and Smarties' "Do you eat the red ones last?" To promote it, TIFF and Isobar launched "We Made It." The online and OOH campaign was contextually relevant, using geo-fencing to target consumers with creative tied to relevant locations, such as TO's Degrassi Street.

# WHEN THE PARTY'S OVER

By Josh Kolm



COORS LIGHT HAS SPENT its last two summers trying to recruit millennials with marketing like the "Summer Games" contest that sent hundreds of "athletes" to a giant outdoor party to compete in elaborate Frisbee golf courses and "volley-pong." Chris Waldock, senior director of marketing at Molson Coors, says in doing so, it was neglecting its slightly older core customer.

If you're the beer of summer, instead of just rowdy parties for young people, you're also speaking to drinkers who enjoy a Coors Light at the cottage or during a backyard BBQ, or to millennials who are more interested in going to one of the music festivals the brand is sponsoring with a handful of close friends.

So Coors Light has suspended the "Summer Games" program this year, and is making its summer plans more inclusive.

For more than a decade, the brand has released "cold certified" cans that change colour when they reach the ideal drinking temp. This year, it added a "summer certified" twist, with sunlight-triggered geometric designs lighting up in yellow and orange hues.

It might seem like a simple promotion, but it marks an evolution for how the brand is approaching its marketing this summer, a key season for the beer category. The cans

continue to play off the brand equity Coors Light has built in "cold" and easy-drinking refreshment that has made it a draw as the weather heats up. But adding a symbol of the joy of summer is an attempt to also connect on the emotional side.

"We're bringing something new to the table to reinforce what we've always been in the minds of consumers," Waldock says. "Canadians long for those sunny days, but if you don't go out there and get them, you'll have missed out on some of the best and most memorable moments."

Other brands have also made new efforts to focus on authentic moments. Bud Light launched the Living Rooms program in May, inviting people to what was positioned less around partying and more on intimate, celebrity-curated VIP events around passions like sports, music and games.

Coors Light also plans to bring this approach to life through the way it activates its sponsorship of the Toronto Raptors and music and winter sports fest Snowbombing.

"Emotionally, [consumers are] looking for occasions where they are connecting with their inner circle, because that's where you are your authentic self and will be the most memorable," Waldock says. "It feels like a richer emotional territory we haven't really ventured into."



# INSURERS RETOOL OFFERS AND AMP UP GOODWILL

By Mark Burgess



Intact's "You Matter" campaign by Cossette looks to differentiate the insurance product by focusing on customer service.

**R**ob Riverso, a former corporate banker, calculated that he was paying about \$40 for insurance every time he drove to visit family in Richmond Hill. Living in downtown Toronto, the Sunday trips with his wife were rare occasions for using his car.

"It's an inherent inefficiency in the market," he says: infrequent drivers basically subsidize regular ones.

He saw an opportunity to pick what he calls "the low-hanging fruit of the industry," and built an app to serve the urban millennial car owner.

Riverso's app, Autonomy, could still be more than a year from launching, as he looks for an insurance company partner to become an exclusive underwriter for the service (which provides the tech, not the coverage).

The plan is to allow users to input what they currently pay for insurance and how frequently they drive, then offer a savings estimate and plan. Catering to a demo accustomed to making purchases on phones, it will feature a driver's licence barcode-scanning tool to keep the registration process to about three minutes, he says.

Autonomy could become the latest disruptor in the increasingly commoditized sector. Currently in market, competitors include LowestRates.ca, which allows consumers to easily compare rates on insurance plans, loans and mortgages, and Metromile in the U.S., which offers pay-per-mile car insurance (whereas Autonomy

is planning to offer a pay-per-time model).

Last year, Canadian insurance co. Intact invested in Metromile, as part of the insurer's "long-term strategy to invest and partner with emerging and innovative businesses."

But now Intact has another strategy to compete against the new entrants. The brand has taken a more emotional, long-term marketing approach that goes beyond pricing.

The "You Matter" campaign by Cossette, which launched in February, focuses on customer service. The emotional spot showed how Intact repaired a blind man's home after a fire, putting everything exactly back into place so that he didn't have to sacrifice his independence. It drives home the insurance company's goal to

provide customer care that goes beyond "things."

Price is the most important point for many people when it comes to insurance, VP of brand development and customer experience Robin Monniere told *strategy* earlier this year. But while product can be copied, customer experience is a potential differentiator.

"Our core belief is that insurance is about people and not things," Monniere said. "Anyone can replace things, but it's how you treat people that will make you a good insurance company."

It's not the only provider taking a more emotional tack. In May, Desjardins, which previously focused marcom on its Ajusto app (which rewards users for good driving habits, with savings on renewals) launched a new brand positioning focusing on its role in the community.

The ads, by Lg2, begin by showing a product (car insurance, mortgage rates) and stating that "If we were any normal financial institution, we'd stop this ad right here." Instead it zooms out to show how Desjardins invests in the community through entrepreneur programs and capital development funds.

So while amping up tech to offer convenience and savings speaks to younger consumers, the real differentiator may be who best engenders trust and goodwill.



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# CARA'S QUEST FOR RELEVANCE

AS THE FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT BUSINESS REMAINS FLAT, MARKETER DAVID COLEBROOK IS TURNING TO MARKET INSIGHTS AND DIGITAL TO CONNECT WITH DINERS.

BY HARMEET SINGH

**A**nyone who's watched *Kitchen Nightmares* (or pretty much any Gordon Ramsay show) knows the restaurant business is ruthless. Entrepreneurs and big businesses alike are up against evolving and fastidious consumer tastes, rising food prices and digital disruption.

"It's a dog fight for share," says David Colebrook, VP, marketing at Cara Operations. His company, however, is the leading operator in the full-service restaurant market, with a value share of 10% in 2016, up from 7% the previous year, according to Euromonitor.

Within the restaurant industry, the quick-service category has been growing, with full-service largely stuck in neutral (the category grew modestly in 2016 but is expected to remain flat this year).

Cara operates within both sides of foodservice, with QSR brands like Harvey's and New York Fries, casual dining chains like Swiss Chalet,

Kelseys and Montana's, as well as local pubs and slightly more upscale restaurants like Bier Markt.

The family-founded company, based in Vaughan, ON, has moved between privately held and publicly traded over the past several decades (it once again went public in 2015). After selling off its airline food business in 2010, the company turned its attention to its restaurants, growing rapidly after it acquired Prime Restaurants (which includes East Side Mario's and Casey's) in 2013 and Quebec's St-Hubert and Calgary's Original Joe's in 2016.

Clearly, Cara is betting on the restaurant business. But as its makeup has changed, so too has consumer tastes and dining habits.

To meet the challenges, Cara has turned inwards.

"We're trying to leverage our scale...to build digital as a competitive advantage for Cara," says Colebrook, a former PepsiCo and Spinmaster marketer who joined Cara in 2012 on the Harvey's brand.

In 2015, the company began building an in-house digital team that is now a central service offering for its brand teams, creating everything from food-focused cinemagraphs and stop-motion graphics to social contests. Its animated content on social has been used to promote Tex-Mex offerings at Montana's (with short videos showing how to make Dorito's Nachos) and cocktail specials at Milestones, for example.

"It's really been a two-year journey starting with three people,"





**"DIGITAL IS THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK THAT'S SLOWLY STARTED EATING UP THE OTHER BUDGETS."**

**-David Colebrook, VP, marketing at Cara Operations.**

**Above:** Cara has a diverse restaurant portfolio, including East Side Mario's, Kelseys, Montana's and Bier Markt, with the company using recent acquisitions as a way to expand into retail. It's also built an in-house team to develop branded cocktail and food recipe content for social.

Colebrook says. The in-house content team initially included a copywriter, graphic designer and digital marketing manager (Jason Cassidy, who is now director of digital marketing and creative for Cara). It has since grown to more than a dozen staff, including animators, graphic designers, photographers, videographers, editors and copywriters.

Cara previously relied largely on traditional media for most of its marketing. This year, Cara tripled its year-over-year digital spend, says Colebrook. Across Cara, the breakdown is around 85% towards traditional and 15% for digital, which is set to grow to about 20% by year's end, he estimates. "Digital is the new kid on the block that's slowly started eating up the other budgets."

In addition to its digital content studio, Cara now regularly meets with companies like Google and Facebook to better understand how to leverage their tools, Colebrook says. For example, the company has been seeing success with Facebook Canvas and is now exploring ways to leverage 360-video.

Cara is also looking to build its in-house app development and data capabilities. Earlier this year, the company brought its CRM capabilities in-house by implementing a Salesforce system to better mine and understand customer data from its 14 restaurant brands and email databases. It's also building out its eight-person data and app development teams.

As it develops its own capabilities by hiring developers, Cara is also partnering with external apps, such as the Weather Network (for geotargeting ads based on weather), TeamSnap (a sports league management app) and Waze. With the latter, Cara is currently looking at using the traffic and navigation app to create pins for its restaurant locations and to make ordering ahead easier, Colebrook says (while Cara's own deal with the app is still being inked, Waze does have an

order ahead feature that Dunkin' Donuts has used in the U.S.).

Ordering and delivery are a key focus for Cara as it aims to make its brands more relevant, with the company also looking at partnerships with UberEats and other aggregators, he adds.

The breakdown between traditional and digital varies from brand to brand, with Cara still relying on external agency partners, particularly for mass advertising, Colebrook says. Traditional advertising still plays a role, with Cara leveraging its size to buy media for its brands collectively, but in a fit-for-purpose way, he says.

For instance, with 300 locations across Canada, Harvey's benefits from mass buys with TSN and Sportsnet, while a Toronto-centric brand like Bier Markt relies more on direct mail and digital. Marketing for its pubs and Milestone's is also completely geotargeted.

Strategy continues to be set largely by Cara's individual brand teams, which vary in size and makeup between head office and in-restaurant, depending on the banner. Each have their own operations leads, as well as chefs for product and menu development.

Over the past few years, Cara's brand teams have gone on market tours as a way to gain insights.

During these research outings, focused particularly on major urban centres in the U.S. and Canada, teams of four or five staff – including marketers, the brand's chef, operations members and franchisees – suss out the food trends having an impact, later adapting them for their respective brands.

Montana's, for example, uses insights from trips to Texas for its barbecue-focused menu, while Harvey's recently launched "Build-a-Bowl" to its menu after seeing trends like "naked burritos" in major U.S. markets. On the pub side of the business, Fionn MacCool's recently created its own sustainability strategy, focused on local ingredient sourcing from the Toronto area. Canadian staple Swiss Chalet, meanwhile, introduced its "World of Flavours" options, inspired by Canadians' tastes for ethnic flavours.

Cara is leaning on its diverse operations in order to grow. Its 2016 acquisition of Laval-based chicken restaurant and manufacturer Groupe St-Hubert and majority stake in Calgary chain Original Joe's have been central to its strategy to learn more about consumers in markets outside of Ontario, where it's foothold has been strongest.

"As we acquire companies, we don't go in, gut them and then say we can run that better," Colebrook says. "It's the opposite – we acquire the talent as well."

With St-Hubert, that's meant gaining a retail and manufacturing division that Cara didn't have before. St-Hubert products, such as sauces and salads, already have a presence in grocery channels (particularly in Quebec), but up until now, Cara's in-store sales have only come from its Swiss Chalet sauce line.

QSRs like Tim Hortons and McDonald's have seen success bringing their products into grocery and now, Cara plans to do the same with its tertiary products, such as a barbecue sauce under the Montana's name, leveraging the expertise of the St-Hubert operations, Colebrook says.

Acquisitions will possibly play a role in Cara's growth going forward, but Colebrook is mum on specifics. In the meantime, he says his M.O. is to continue exploring the digital sphere, looking for ways to connect with diners, one restaurant at a time. ☞

# DID A ROBOT WRITE THAT AD?

BY MARK BURGESS

AGENCIES ARE TESTING AI FOR AD DELIVERY. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR THE CREATIVE?



**Above:** The shaggy dog in McCann Japan's AI-CD spot for Clorets, conveying fresh breath that lasts for 10 minutes.

**Opposite:** Three of the seven million Nutella jars that an algorithm helped create in Italy.

A shaggy dog in a business suit picks himself up off a rain-soaked Japanese pedestrian mall to a soundtrack of mournful howls, and ingests a Clorets Mint Tab. Green pixels explode from his mouth. The sound shifts to hardy barks as he takes out a stopwatch, runs his paws through his hair, and blasts off into the sky, leaving his business attire behind.

That's what creatives at McCann Japan came up with based on direction from their "AI-CD." The agency pitted the machine against a real, flesh-and-blood CD last year to see who could produce a better Clorets ad, conveying instant fresh breath that lasts for 10 minutes.

The AI-CD is a database of award-winning Japanese advertising from the past 10 years. The agency's creatives deconstructed and analyzed the ads, tagging the elements that made them successful. For Clorets, the AI-CD wanted to "convey 'wild' with a song in an urban tone,

leaving an image of refreshment with a feeling of liberation," *Ad Age* reported. Humans took over from there and made the ad with the mutt.

The competing spot showed a woman on a rooftop writing the brand benefits in calligraphy. It narrowly beat the AI-CD in a blind online consumer poll (54% to 46%).

Despite what some consider a successful use of creative AI, the day when robots make CDs obsolete is probably not imminent. But brands and agencies are taking note of how the relationship with technology is changing roles and creativity more broadly. AI is already being used to target ads and match brands with influencers. How long until it plays a bigger role in the creative process?

Scott Suthren, VP of planning at Cheil Canada, says that is still a solely human domain at his agency. But machines are delivering ads, which affects the creative product. Teams must think in terms of segments, creating variations and no

longer relying as much on "a simple, single ad," he says.

The message of ads targeting consumers in a specific place and time can be somewhat limited by that information. Kellogg's Vector cereal recently worked with Google and Starcom to make six-second YouTube ads targeting urban Canadians based on their location and weather. A base video of the cereal box could display messages for 20 cities and five different weather patterns, said Natasha Millar, a senior marketing director at Kellogg, in an email.

Served through Google AdWords, the script retrieved the latest weather for each targeted city every hour to ensure it delivered the correct information. Each version pushed Vector's fitness-positive message: "Chase the clouds Toronto!" or "Edmonton, don't let the rain set your tempo."

It was the company's first test with the dynamic ads, and Millar said it's "just starting to understand

how creative and targeting should influence each other in a programmatic world.”

McCann Japan showed



experiments are already underway for AI-generated creative. Shun Matsuzaka, who led the AI-CD project, said in a statement that the robot was “free of bias or habits in the way of thinking that can limit human creators. This allows it to come up with creative direction that humans would never think of.”

One of the arguments creatives bring against big data and machine-generated creative is that it won't come up with something entirely new. Creating an AI-CD that analyzes a decade of award-winning ads won't produce anything vastly different from the previous decade's award-winning ads, the argument goes. It's synthesizing, not creating. The question is how different this is from the human process, and how helpful it can be anyway.

Suthren says creative agencies can use machines as stimulus tools or brute-force generators of unconventional ideas. “The AI systems do not have any

assumptions going in,” he says. “So anything they put out is novel and new and different, and could be creating connections.”

That's why Russell Davies, chief strategy officer at BETC London, created a tagline-generating Twitter bot. Taglines are “a strange literary form,” he wrote in *Campaign*. “A narrow range of grammatical possibilities, a pretty limited vocabulary and they don't really have to make sense.”

His bot, @taglin3r, spits out a new one every hour, uninhibited by human restrictions like logic and syntax. “Only Inspire Your Favourite Delight,” it tweeted the morning this article was written. Not the next “Just Do It,” but it probably beats some enhanced methods for burrowing into a creative brief, like the “vitamin” injection Don Draper and co lined up for in that *Mad Men* episode.

Speaking at Toronto's CMDC Conference in April, MIT Media Lab assistant professor Kevin Slavin raised a concern about relying on machines in relation to programs film studios can use as shortcuts for evaluating scripts, by running them against established story arcs. “We as a species are novelty seekers. We sell it, we buy it, we demand it, we require it. And we won't get there by repeating what we've done,” he said.

The opportunity lies in humans working with machines to improve creativity and overcome blockages we fail to recognize, he said. “The greatest use of all this may not be in recognizing patterns that we can't see but rather *breaking* the patterns that we can't see.”

Mirum president Mitch Joel says the best use for machines could be to receive creative briefs outlining what brands want to achieve, spitting out taglines for humans to sift through, and then testing those choices. “Sentiment, imagery, brand

history: think about all the inputs that a computer can capitalize on against a database,” he says.

This type of capability is already surfacing in design. Richard Thomas, co-founder of Toronto-based design and technology firm The Foresight Studio, says programs that allow users to input a design problem and receive “potentially millions of solutions” are changing the game.

One of these is Toronto-based Autodesk's Dreamcatcher. The software lets designers enter a project's functional requirements, manufacturing method and cost limits. It synthesizes the information and runs it against “a vast number of generated designs” (for a car or a chair, for example) before presenting solutions, its website says. Logojoy, also in Toronto, is offering something more basic for branding: users choose five logos from a few dozen, add colour and icon preferences, and presto – the algorithm presents a number of options. Nutella, working with Ogilvy & Mather Italia, used an algorithm to create seven million versions of its graphic identity, which were sold on unique jars.

Exposure to the volume of possible solutions from programs like Dreamcatcher is “going to change the psychology of designers,” Thomas says. “Right now we do that by reading books and absorbing as much as we can,” but even the most erudite AD can't compete with the software's millions of data points.

He says machines will “fundamentally change” the designer's role into teachers of their tools, feeding algorithms the right information. A lot of the time spent on rote work will be automated, freeing designers, artists and engineers to focus on bigger questions like goals and societal impact.

That may be enough to lift the world-weary dog's sprits if he ever runs out of Clorets.



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# THE NEW (OLD) FACE OF TV

It seems the “death of TV” narrative has been greatly exaggerated. Audiences are decreasing, albeit gradually, but TV remains the dominant platform for reach in Canada, with the country tuning in more than the global average. And while the digital revolution has made attracting eyeballs more difficult, broadcasters aren’t taking the challenge lying down. At this year’s upfronts, many of them rallied around the brand safety of their channels against the unpredictability of Facebook Live and YouTube. They’re also attempting to make TV mass again with easy-viewing content and high-profile reboots like *Will & Grace* and *Roseanne*. The conventional stars are bigger, the specialty niches are more defined and the nets are upping their OTT game. Read on to see what big guns they’re bringing to the fight.



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# LEAN INTO FALL TV

BUYERS WEIGH IN ON WHICH NEW SHOWS AND CLASSIC REBOOTS WILL CATCH THE MOST BUZZ AS BROADCASTERS BRING CONVENTIONAL BACK TO ITS ROOTS.

BY VAL MALONEY AND BREE RODY-MANTHA

**T**he adage goes, “If you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em.” But amidst competition from digital players, and while a generation of children grows up not knowing the concept of a “timeslot,” TV is marching to the beat of its own drum.

Conventional networks are differentiating from specialty and OTT by bringing in new procedural dramas, comedies and action series, outweighing the serialized stories specialty networks are known for.

For some broadcasters, it’s about sticking to what they know best. City is veering back into familiar comedic territory, while CTV is offering a *Big Bang* spinoff, Global is building on its action and drama slate and CBC continues to invest in classic Canadiana.

The message across the board at this year’s upfronts was clear: the power of TV for brand building isn’t going away. And if you thought it had, then the message was that it’s back.

Barb Williams, EVP and COO at Corus Entertainment, said conventional TV was battling an identity crisis, but that it’s come back to its roots.

Recent enhancements to ad targeting and measurement are giving TV more power by bringing it closer to options available on digital. It’s also getting big buzz thanks to reboots and brand extensions that have broad appeal, big brands and big stars.

Among the notable returning shows is *Will & Grace*, which is resuming on Global **Thursday** nights at **9 p.m.** after more than a decade off the air. The show will bring back the original principal cast, director James Burrows (who headed up every episode of the series’ original 10 seasons) and writers Max Mutchnick and David Kohan.

Williams said the return of the original cast and crew will give fans of the first series something to cheer for, but believes *Will & Grace* will also draw a new crowd.

**Above:** Global’s *Will & Grace* returns to TV after more than a decade off the air.

**Right:** Global is banking on success with a revamped S.W.A.T.

"I think when we've seen the remakes of some of these other shows, we've seen that they work for multiple audiences," she says. "I think of *Gilmore Girls* [the Netflix revival]. Frankly, I wanted to watch it again and my daughter who didn't see it the first time around wanted to watch it. So it's definitely opening it up to a new audience."

Anthropologist Johanna Faigelman, founding partner and CEO, Human Branding, says that reboots of '90s shows give millennials the opportunity to escape back to a time before the internet.

"TV is escapism in and of itself, but the notion of a simpler, retro show can allow me to escape from my life and the stresses and anxieties," she says. "There is a kind of groundedness and simplicity that resonates now. Interestingly, the 1990s was the decade that millennials sort of cling to, just before the boom of social media."

Lindsey Talbot, managing director, trading and activation at Maxus Canada, thinks the strategy of not overstaying its welcome and starting with a 12-episode order is a good one.

Valerie McMorran, EVP and investment director at Starcom, says bringing back a former hit is often an easy yes for placing ad dollars.

"From a buying perspective you're always looking for programs that deliver," she says. "If it's tried and true then you just pay X and you get Y. There isn't a lot of risk with those."

Also joining the Global schedule is a made-for-the-21st-century installation of 1970's cop drama **S.W.A.T.** (led by an all-new cast including *Criminal Minds*' Shemar Moore and created by *Friday Night Lights*' producer Aaron Thomas). The reboot, airing **Thursday** nights at **10 p.m.** on Global, features Moore as a newly appointed S.W.A.T. captain who steps in after his successor accidentally shoots a black teenager.



## TRUE PATRIOT(IC) LOVE

At a time of political, economical and environmental uncertainty in the world, Corus' Barb Williams says some people just want to know someone's watching over them. "The world is a complicated, insecure place, so you'll see the heroes theme emerge in the zeitgeist in times like this."

That's partly why Corus picked up three distinct military dramas during upfronts season, in a goal to expand on what audiences love about hero shows.

First up is CBS's **SEAL Team** (left), which will air **Wednesday** nights at **9 p.m.** on Global. The series stars David Boreanaz (of *Buffy* and *Angel* fame) as the leader of an elite team of officers conducting high-stakes, clandestine missions. *SEAL Team* will go up against dramas *Law & Order: SVU* on CTV and *Arrow* on CTV Two, comedies *Modern Family* and *Black-ish* on City, and family drama *The Durrells* on CBC in early fall.

Maxus' Lindsey Talbot describes the series as heavy in subject matter, and believes this may make it challenging to attract regular viewers. However, she adds that the starpower of Boreanaz would give it a boost.

Global has also scooped up **The Brave** (right) from NBC, fronted by Anne Heche (*Hung*) and Mike Vogel (*Under the Dome*). The character-driven drama features Heche's character manning an intelligence team that

detects and interprets threats, relaying the information to Vogel's team in the field. The show will air **Monday** nights at **10 p.m.**

Williams says *The Brave* is more of a "straight-up action" and procedural show than *SEAL Team*, and that the former may attract a male audience while the latter is



more likely for co-viewing. That will take on another newcomer, CTV's *The Good Doctor*, along with City's *Scorpion*, in the same slot.

Joining S.W.A.T. teams, SEALs and spies this fall is the CW's **Valor**, set on a U.S. Army base for a unit of helicopter pilots. It landed on Corus' specialty W Network (see p. 25).



# **GO BIG**

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**Sheldon**



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CTV's 2017/18 schedule, go to [bellmedia.ca/upfront](http://bellmedia.ca/upfront)





Right: CTV is going for more bang with *Young Sheldon*, a spinoff from its ratings goldmine *Big Bang Theory*.

Series star Moore said at Corus' upfront that the original characters and theme song are meant to appeal to classic fans, and that the series tackles topical subjects to capture a younger, socially aware audience. "The 70's show was pure entertainment... This is entertainment with a lot of lessons."

Another return to the airwaves is '90s classic *Roseanne*, which has been snatched up by CTV for mid-season. The working-class family comedy will bring back the whole Conner family, with stars Roseanne Barr and Sarah Gilbert among the executive producers (as well as *2 Broke Girls* creator and star Whitney Cummings). Talbot isn't certain this reboot will play out as well as *Will & Grace*, noting she doesn't think there is the same appetite for the show in Canada as there might be south of the border.

Also getting a refresh is the 80's primetime soap *Dynasty*, picked up by CW and produced by the team that brought *Gossip Girl* to the small screen – the Netflix copro,



however, wasn't made available to a Canadian broadcaster.

While bringing back big names from the past is one programming strategy, another is expanding on the star power that's already on screen.

The biggest example of that is *Young Sheldon* (left), which CTV will lead in with its parent show *The Big Bang Theory* in a **Thursday** night comedy block from **8 p.m. to 9 p.m.** beginning in November.

CBS' prequel series follows an elementary school-aged Sheldon (played by Iain Armitage of *Big Little Lies*), with *Big Bang's* Jim Parsons (adult Sheldon) narrating and also executive producing. He's joined by Jon

Favreau (*The Orville*, *Iron Man*) and Chuck Lorre (*The Big Bang Theory*, *Mike & Molly*), who are also on as EPs.

Talbot says the show, which runs with a voiceover from Parsons in place of a laugh track, has a *Wonder Years* feel to it, and bets the comedic format is different



## TRUE CRIME MEETS PRIME TIME

Thanks to documentaries and anthologies like Netflix's *Making a Murderer* and FX's *American Crime Story*, as well as investigative podcasts such as *Serial* and the CBC's *Someone Knows Something*, true crime is stepping into mainstream TV.

There's the CBC's original docuseries *The Detectives*, which blends first-person documentary narrative with scripted, reenacted drama. Each episode will follow a different detective telling the story of a real case and the impact it had on Canadian society and law enforcement. Produced by Debbie Travis (*Chuck's Week Off*), Jennifer Gation (*Limelight*), Hans Rosenstein (*The Property Shop*) Petro Duszara (*Just For Laughs*) and Scott Bailey (*Headache*), *The Detectives* will air **Thursdays at 9 p.m.**

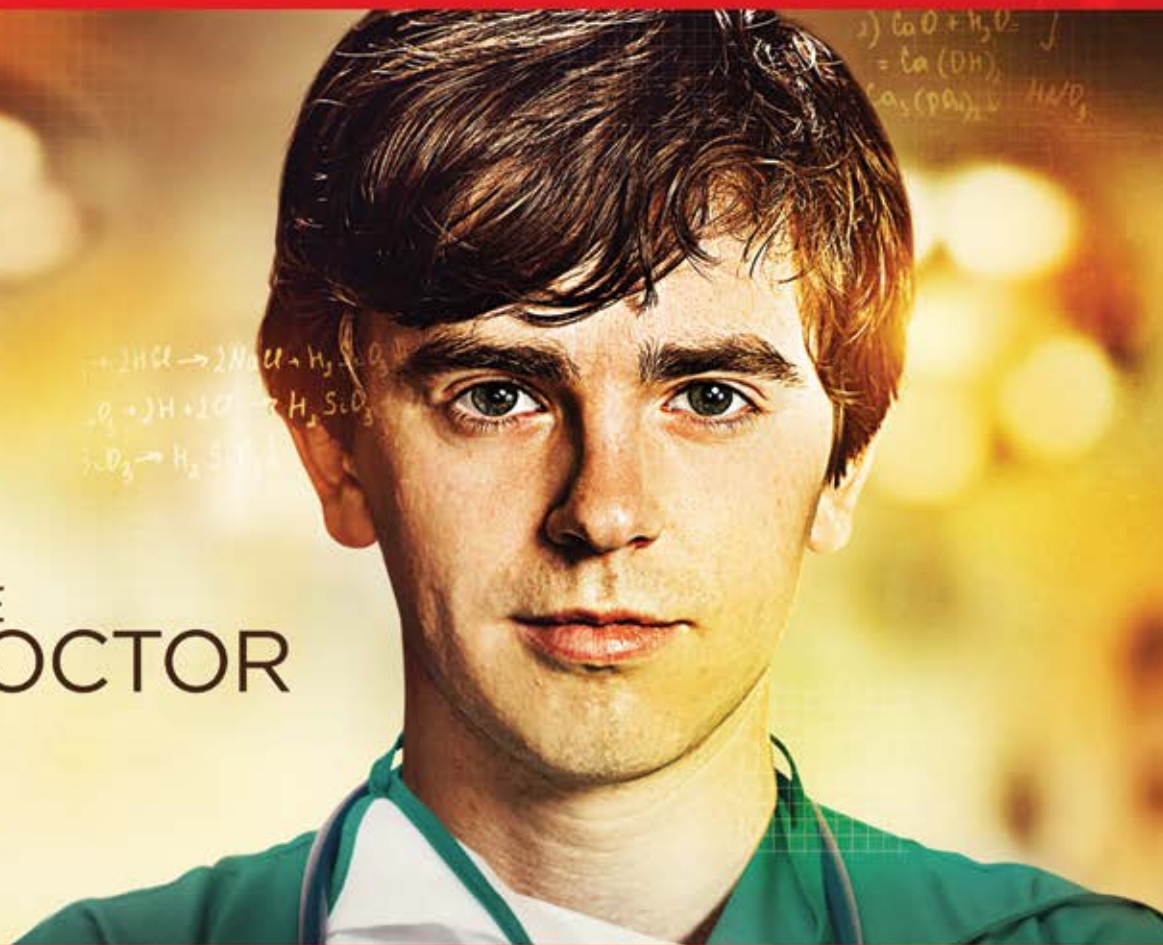
Another piece of Cancon true crime is City's original series *Bad Blood*. The mini-series, airing **Thursday** nights at **8 p.m.**, will peer into the life of Montreal mobster Vito Rizzuto and is based on the book *Business or Blood: Mafia Boss Vito Rizzuto's Last War*. The show is from New Metric Media (*Letterkenny*).

Finally, Global's *Law & Order True Crime: The Menendez Murders* is a spin-off produced by Dick Wolfe, following an anthology format that dedicates each season to an infamous crime story. The series will air **Tuesdays at 10 p.m.** and aims to capture not only 25 to 54 co-viewing audiences that love the original *Law & Order* franchise, but also millennials who were too young to remember the case, says Corus' Williams.

Media Experts' Bidwell says the stardom of Edie Falco as famed attorney Leslie Abramson would propel it ahead of another newcomer in the 10 p.m. slot, *The Gospel of Kevin* on CTV.

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enough to draw in new fans that aren't already watching *Big Bang*.

The *Big Bang* double-header will face competition from a few other comedies in its 8 to 9 p.m. time slot, squaring off against *Superstore* and *The Good Place* on Global, and against City's *Bad Blood* in early fall, followed by *The Orville* (pictured, below left) in late fall. It will also go against football content on CTV Two, as well as *Dragons' Den* on CBC.

CTV is also betting on more winning content from hit maker Shonda Rhimes, picking up her *Grey's Anatomy* firefighter spinoff for midseason. The currently untitled drama is the second spinoff from *Grey's* after *Private Practice*, which ran for six seasons.

Mike Cosentino, SVP, content and programming at Bell Media says CTV has been on the hunt for a firefighter drama for a while, and that it even had its own show in mind before Global launched *Chicago Fire* in 2012. They've finally landed at the firehall with the upcoming Shondaland show, which Cosentino is banking will see the same success as past and current hits like *How to Get Away with Murder* and *Scandal*.



The channel has also picked up Rhimes' new midseason legal drama ***For the People***. Set in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York, the

drama follows a group of new lawyers as they handle some of the most high-profile federal cases in the country. Show stars include Ben Rappaport (*Outsourced*), Susannah Flood (*Chicago Fire*) and Wesam Keesh (*Awkward*).

Rhimes and co-exec producer Betsy Beers (*Grey's Anatomy*) are on for both shows.

CTV is building on its superhero programming that the channel has become known for, picking up two new Marvel shows this season. Faigelman says the hero format is always a goldmine for millennials because it was popular in the 90s and that heroes appeal to people in times of uncertainty and crisis.

"When you're dealing with complexity, as a human being, you tend to look for things that have simplicity," she says. "You clean your house for, example. Superhero shows give the notion of creating a relationship with a hero-based character where I can, for an hour, see problems being solved. I can get a feeling of life not being that difficult."

First up is ***Marvel's The Gifted***, from Fox, which is billed by some critics as being the *X-Men* version of NBC's *Heroes*, that ran from 2006 to 2010. The new show focuses on a suburban family that is forced to flee from a government agency when it discovers that the children have special powers, such as manipulating air and causing mass explosions. Stephen Moyer (*True Blood*), Amy Acker (*Angel*) and Natalie Alyn Lind (*The Goldbergs*) star in the show, which comes from Matt Nix (*Burn Notice*, *The Good Guys*) and director Bryan Singer (*X-Men*).



## MEDICAL DRAMAS WITH HEART

A medical drama from the creator of *House* is going to be the "show of the year," according to CTV's Cosentino, who is banking on ***The Good Doctor*** to attract viewers in its **Monday night 10 p.m.** timeslot.

From David Shore and based on a South Korean drama, *The Good Doctor* follows a paediatrician with Savant syndrome and autism.

Cosentino says the new feel-good series and its underdog theme "feels like a Monday show" that will help people start the week. It's playing into Bell Media's strategy to go for shows with heart, rather than military dramas.

"We wanted to go with family and heart because CNN has become the new series," says Randy Lennox, president, Bell Media. "And there is so much going on in the world that we wanted to be the antidote to that. The reality of the news needs a counterbalance."

Coming midseason to City is ***The Resident***, which follows an idealistic young doctor, played by Manish Dayal (*One Hundred Foot Journey*), and his brilliant but unconventional senior resident, played by Matt Czuchy (*The Good Wife*, *Gilmore Girls*). Their boss, played by Bruce Greenwood (*Star Trek*), might not be everything he seems to be.

Media Experts' Bidwell likes the feel of *The Resident*, saying it will fill some holes for viewers looking for more medical dramas.

Right: Marvel's *Inhumans*, on CTV, taps into the appeal of *The Avengers*.

*The Gifted* will air **Mondays at 9 p.m.** on CTV, challenged by CBC's *Alias Grace* in early fall and *Frankie Drake Mysteries* in late fall, and *NCIS: New Orleans* on Global. It will also face competition during the second hour with City's *Dancing with the Stars* and CTV Two's *The Voice*.


Despite the competition, Jennifer Bidwell, managing director, television systems, Media Expert, says *The Gifted* looks promising, noting the quality that's expected of Marvel, as well as its family-friendly focus. Cosentino added it looks and plays more like a family adventure drama than a typical Marvel show.

Also coming to CTV is **Marvel's *Inhumans*** from ABC. The show, based on the comic book series of the same name, follows a group of isolated superhumans that include Black Bolt (Anson



Mount of Hell on *Wheels*), Maximus (Iwan Rheon of *Game of Thrones*) and Medusa (Serinda Swan of *Ballers*). The series is executive produced by Scott Buck (*Dexter*), along with Jeph Loeb and Jim Chory (both of *Heroes*).

Cosentino says the "Avenger-like" show will attract a young, co-viewing audience, with a focus on adults 18 to 49. It airs **Friday** nights at **9 p.m.** on CTV, with a worldwide premiere also being broadcast live in IMAX theatres in the fall. It will compete for viewers against CBC's *The Fifth Estate*, CTV Two's *The Exorcist*, Global's *Hawaii Five-O* and City comedies *The Middle* and *Speechless*.

In this slot, Bidwell says Marvel's young fan-base would likely give it an edge, but it will still face competition from the consistently well-liked *Hawaii Five-O*. 



## OUT-THERE COMEDY

Mid-season was all about time travel – from heroes *Making History* on City to novelists tracking down killers in *Time after Time* on CTV. This fall, however, the otherworldly

theme will be set in space, and it will be funny. Two new sci-fi comedies are coming next season with Fox's ***The Orville*** and ***Ghosted*** (pictured left), which were both picked up by City.

From executive producer and creator Seth MacFarlane, as well as director Jon Favreau, *The Orville* is a sci-fi comedy that's set 400 years in the future and on an exploratory spacecraft. MacFarlane also stars as the ship's commander, unfortunately his ex-girlfriend, played by Adrienne Palicki (*Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.*), is the first officer.

Media Experts' Bidwell billed it as a well-timed comedy that's like "Star Trek meets... Seth MacFarlane." It's set to air at **9 p.m.** in the competitive **Thursday** night block against *Gotham* on CTV, the NFL on CTV Two and *Will & Grace* on Global in September before moving to 8 p.m. against *The Big Bang Theory* in late fall. Bidwell doesn't think it can

compete against the mass appeal of *Will & Grace* and the popular *Big Bang*.

Also new is *Ghosted*, which stars Craig Robinson (*The Office*) and Adam Scott (*Parks and Recreation*) as a cynical skeptic and a "true believer," tasked with saving the human race from aliens. Kevin Etten (*Son of Zorn*, *Desperate Housewives*) is on as a showrunner.

The pickup from Fox would have all the makings for a potential laugh-out loud movie, says Bidwell, but she isn't sure how the show will play on TV. "I felt that the mismatched characters would have a tough time delivering the same kinds of laughs week over week," she says.

*Ghosted* is booked to air in the **Sunday** night comedy lineup at **8:30 p.m.** on City. That block will also contain the Russell Peters-fronted *The Indian Detective* (an original from CraveTV touching down on traditional TV) and new crime drama *Wisdom of the Crowd*.

Clockwise from top left: *Corner Gas Animated*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Valor* and *Life Sentence* are all on specialty next season.



# SPECIALTY SHIFTS

WHILE CONVENTIONAL IS COMING BACK TO ITS BROAD AUDIENCE STRENGTHS, SPECIALTY IS FINE TUNING ITS NICHE TARGETS.

## W NETWORK BUILDS ON DRAMA

Corus Entertainment is fine-tuning its portfolio. Barb Williams, EVP and COO, says her team is happy with Corus' dominance in the lifestyle and kids verticals, and while Showcase already exists in the dramatic space, with shows like *Mr. Robot*, she wants to build its scripted footprint.

To that end, Corus recently decided to shift some, but not all, of its lifestyle content on W Network (like *Property Brothers*, *Love it or List it* and *Masters of Flip* over to HGTV) and replace it with more dramatic content, acquiring the newest season of *Nashville* last fall and picking up shows like military drama *Valor* this season. The latter show stars Matt Barr (*Hatfields & McCoys*) and Christina Ochoa (*Animal Kingdom*) as elite U.S. Army helicopter pilots torn between duty and desire.

Lindsey Talbot, managing director, trading and activation, Maxus Canada, says Corus' strategy must be working, because W Network has held steady and HGTV has risen slightly, while other channels have fallen. Viewership on W Network has jumped 8% for adults 35 and over and 7% for women 35-plus, between the start of the year and May 2017, according to Numeris figures from Corus.

## COMEDY GOES MASS

Bell Media is getting laughs with its comedy channel, but Mike Cosentino, SVP of content and programming, is aiming to drive more female viewers to the male-heavy station with a new primetime

programming strategy this September.

It's adding comedies with mass appeal, like *Friends* and *Seinfeld*, to lead into the 10 p.m. timeslot, where Comedy continues to place original series and first-run programs like ***Corner Gas Animated***, the second season of satirical news show *The Beaverton* and shows from Bell Media's partnership with *Just for Laughs*.

The upcoming animated *Corner Gas* brings viewers back to Dog River, with series creator and star Brent Butt back as an executive producer. Episodes will air in 2018. The original series ran for 107 episodes, with its finale watched by 3.02 million viewers in 2009.

Cosentino says adding accessible programming ahead of Comedy's 10 p.m. shows will should draw in a broader crowd. The channel didn't place in the top 10 for women 18 to 49 or 25 to 54, according to Numeris, but sits at #7 for male audiences age 18 to 49 and 25 to 54.

## BRAVO'S BOLD STRATEGY

Building off of its strongest single-show debut with the premiere of dystopian drama ***The Handmaid's Tale***, Bell's goal for Bravo is to add more "smart but bold premium TV" content in the fall, says Cosentino.

The strategy is to add content that continues to drive female audiences, while not alienating male viewers. "And that's not to say it needs to be 100% drama," he says. "We think it can become a destination channel."

New show ***Life Sentence*** bridges the drama-comedy gap for the channel. Bell is betting it will give Bravo variety and draw wider audiences. The dramedy stars Lucy Hale (*Pretty Little Liars*) as a girl who spends eight years thinking she was dying of cancer. She then faces the effects of her "live in the moment" lifestyle when she's cured.

Adding to this is ***Philip K. Dick's Electric Dreams***, a sci-fi anthology series inspired by the author's stories, as adapted by writers like Michael Dinner (*Justified*) and Tony Grisoni (*Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*).



# HOW HYPERLOCAL MARKETING WITH POSTAL CODES CAN LIFT YOUR ACQUISITION RETURNS



It's estimated the average person is exposed to hundreds of ads and thousands of brands each day – but only 12 ads make an impression. That reality means marketers have a tough time being heard, let alone acquiring new customers. Hyperlocal marketing increases your odds of breaking through. It's a technique that works by targeting small, geographically centered communities, giving marketers the power to tailor messages to resonate with prospects' immediate and compelling interests.

You can find out what those interests are by using postal codes with data overlays to create a detailed picture of who lives or works at particular addresses. You can also segment hyperlocal prospect groups by income, education, age, ethnicity, buying patterns, car ownership and much more.

## Taking it hyperlocal

When you go hyperlocal for acquisition, whether through digital or direct mail, three targeting considerations should be top of mind: Where do your existing customers live? What is the profile of your high-value customers? Where can you find prospects who mirror your best existing customers?

Hyperlocal targeting can lead to those answers. Start with postal codes.

## What's hidden in a postal code?

Every postal code is broken in two parts.

The first three characters cover about 9,000 addresses. Those characters reveal where in Canada the address is located, whether the location is rural or urban, and the larger section of a city or town it's in. This is the level that digital postal code targeting, like Google's, pinpoints.

The second part of the postal code also includes three characters. They narrow the area down to an average of just 20 addresses. They identify whether the address is a business, house or apartment building. In urban centres, they reveal the block and even the side of the street the address is on. This is the level of targeting precision available with Canada Post's Postal Code Targeting.

## Acquisition marketing's gold standard? Targeted, repeat exposure

The ideal acquisition campaign delivers high value, long-term customers. Once identified, it may take several exposures to convert these ideal prospects to customers. And that engagement is likely to require touch points across different marketing channels.

Repetition builds credibility and trust; the more often people see a message, the more inclined they are to believe and remember it. The marketer's takeaway? You'll probably get better return on investment by sending the same message three times to 10,000 people, rather than sending it once to 30,000 prospects.

## Increase visibility with integration

Acquisition campaigns can lift their reach and impact by combining physical and digital. Encourage action by blending physical with location-based digital targeting from companies like Google and Bing, that serve your business on search, mobile and display platforms, and through location extensions.

When using a direct mail acquisition solution like Canada Post's Postal Code Targeting, suppress your existing customers' addresses from the mailing. Not only does this save you from spending money on customers you already have, you aren't sending them irrelevant messages that damage their relationship with your business.

In the end, hyperlocal marketing makes it easier to attract consumer attention with relevant messages. Eliminating the scattershot acquisition approach and suppressing existing customers provides more bang for the marketing budget.



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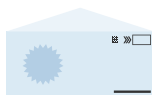
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# WHAT'S NEXT IN THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Canada's BDUs and networks are upping their digital game to vye for eyeballs in the streaming wars.

BY CHRIS POWELL

Sept. 6 marks the 65th anniversary of the first Canadian television broadcast from CBFT Montreal, the country's first TV station. According to the public broadcaster's archives, it began at 4 p.m. with the airing of the movie *Aladdin and His Lamp*, "followed by a cartoon, a French film, a news review and a bilingual variety show."

So, in a sense, TV in Canada has officially reached retirement age. Instead of enjoying its top spot in Canada's entertainment firmament, reinvention is the focus of TV's golden years. Consumer adoption of network TV alternatives like Netflix and Amazon

Prime Video, coupled with the content available on YouTube and quasi-legal sources like Periscope and torrents, is requiring broadcast groups to straddle the line between traditional TV and digital.

This "tra-digital" approach encompasses everything from over-the-top (OTT) offerings, like Bell Media's CraveTV, to streaming websites and mobile apps like Global Go and City Video that provide on-the-go access to primetime hits.

While primarily focused on delivering traditional TV content, some broadcasters are also experimenting with exclusive digital content.

At its annual upfront event in May, CBC Television announced a full slate of 15 digital series that will appear exclusively on its Watch.CBC.ca website and the CBC TV app. They include the returning series *My 90-Year-Old Roommate* and *The Amazing Gayl Pile*, augmented by new shows such as *Kids That Are Kind of Amazing at Stuff...With Gerry Dee*, and *How to Buy a Baby*.

Richard Kanee, the CBC's head of digital, says that the public broadcaster's investment in online is an acknowledgement of the growing role on-demand and on-the-go viewing plays in TV/video consumption.

The CBC also makes much of its broadcast content available digitally via its website and the CBC TV app, with shows available immediately after they have aired in the Atlantic Canada time zone. The public broadcaster streams approximately 1,500 hours of live content each year, says Kanee, most of it news and sports.

It's also set to launch an OTT product of its own, an English-language service under the working title CBCX, which will roll into the market next year. Few details have been revealed on the product, but it will contain access to CBC's live linear TV signal and a back catalogue for catch-up viewing.

"We anticipate a day when over-the-top (OTT) will be the primary front door to our content," he says.

Kanee's admission acknowledges the growing importance of non-standard delivery mechanisms for broadcasters, particularly as Canadians continue to ditch their cable and satellite subscriptions in record numbers. Mario Mota of the Ottawa consultancy Boon Dog Professional Services said that 202,000 people – equivalent to roughly 2% of the total market – cut their cable or satellite subscription last year, and the trend shows no sign of abating.

Meanwhile, Kanee says the CBC experienced a 36% jump in unique visitors and a 73% increase in the number of episodes initiated on its digital platforms during the past season. It does not disclose how many streams are viewed to completion, although Kanee says there is some drop-off, which tends to mirror digital behaviour in general.

The public broadcaster's digital platforms attracted upwards of one million unique



visitors per month during the past season, with *Schitt's Creek* and *Kim's Convenience* being "huge performers," Kanee says.

Both Corus Entertainment and Rogers Media declined to be interviewed for this story, although both offer on-demand viewing products for their respective conventional TV networks, Global Television and City. Rogers also operates the Sportsnet Now app, as well as streaming products for properties including FX and The Shopping Channel.

Bell Media has added Bravo and Space to its suite of GO apps, which encompass several English services including CTV, TSN, Discovery, Comedy and CP24, as well as the French services Super Écran and RDS. Users have to authenticate their cable or satellite account to access the content.

The GO apps were introduced primarily as a catch-up service, but Bell has added full seasons of what Tracey Pearce, president of distribution and pay, describes as a "significant number" of series in an effort to entice users. "The trick is always how much do we put in the storefront to get people excited about it, and how much do we put behind the wall," she says.

As with regular TV, the CTV and Discovery GO apps, which includes *Animal Planet* and the full suite of Discovery content, are its most popular.

Although she predicts continued growth for on-demand products, Pearce doesn't accept the notion that conventional TV is ready for a send-off just yet. "We often forget how big and powerful linear TV is – it's huge compared to the on-demand space," says Pearce. "People still enjoy that common viewing experience, and not just in sports. Linear TV will continue to be a juggernaut."

But Solutions Research Group (SRG) president Kaan Yigit believes the next few years will be defined by more streaming, much as the years in the wake of the iPhone's 2007 debut were characterized by the widespread adoption of mobile, and the previous decade by the advent of the internet and home computing.

According to a recent report from Media Technology Monitors (MTM), one of every eight Anglophone Canadians has now adopted a "TV my way" approach – eschewing a traditional paid TV subscription

in favour of online-only viewing.

In its April "couch potato" report, the U.S.-based Convergence Research Group said that revenue for OTT providers in Canada, led by Netflix, increased 35% to US\$651 million last year, and is expected to reach US\$827 million this year. OTT revenues, meanwhile, are expected to account for 69% of Canada's movie/TV revenue this year, up from 61% last year.

The report pegged 2012 as the beginning of the cord-cutter/never era, and estimated that 3.43 million Canadian households (23.8%) – exceeding the U.S. on a percentage basis (22.3%) – did not have a traditional TV subscription at the end of 2016. That number is expected to grow to

a \$79 annual subscription to the online retailer's Amazon Prime service. Other entrants include Rogers Media's one-year-old Sportsnet Now and Vidéotron's French-language service Club Illico.

AMC's horror-themed service Shudder TV also launched in Canada last year. It is available for \$4.95 a month or \$49 per year, and claims that 85% of its more than 200 horror and suspense titles are exclusive.

But consumers hopeful that Amazon Prime Video's arrival in Canada might usher in a new wave of foreign services should dial back their expectations. A spokesperson for Santa Monica-based Hulu told *strategy* that the nine-year-old service remains focused on its U.S. business, and had "no additional



4.18 million by the end of the year.

Boon Dog's Mota describes cord-cutting as an "unstoppable train," that is only going to accelerate, and last year's CRTC-mandated introduction of skinny basic and pick-and-pay packages is unlikely to slow or stop these subscriber defections, since its impact on price is negligible.

Beyond Netflix, OTT streaming options in Canada remain largely limited to Bell Media's two-and-a-half year old CraveTV and Amazon Prime Video – a relatively new entrant to the market that comes free with

news" on possible international expansion.

Hulu, which has a reported 12 million subscribers, recently scored its first major success with its original adaptation of Canadian author Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* (which is airing on the Bell Media-owned specialty service Bravo in Canada).

Hulu is also now pursuing cord-cutters and the growing number of "cord-nevers" – those people who have never had a cable or satellite TV subscription – with the U.S. launch of a live TV streaming service offering

**Right:** Bell believes exclusive content like *Letterkenny* will draw subscribers.



approximately 50 channels for \$40 a month.

Bell is wooing the same constituency with its recent launch of Fibe Alt TV. Described by Bell as the country's first app-based TV service, Alt TV enables users to watch live and on-demand television without a traditional TV subscription or set-top box (although they must subscribe to Fibe internet).

Considered a complement to Bell's CraveTV, Alt TV is built around a dedicated app offering up to 500 regular (i.e. ad-supported) TV channels, accessible through users' device of choice. The service starts at \$14.95 for just over 30 channels, including the major Canadian and U.S. networks, and users have the ability to add another 10 channels of their choosing for \$20 a month; sports channels for an additional \$25 and TMN/HBO for \$20. Alt TV also offers pre-assembled "good," "better" and "best" channel packages.

Nicolas Poirtras, VP of marketing communications at Bell, says the company's Alt TV is specifically aimed at the growing number of cord-nevers.

"[Cord-nevers] consume on-demand, but what they tell us is lacking is legal, good live TV on the web," he says. "They know how they can get a TV series, but not how to legally

get a hockey game or a big awards show."

Initially available to Fibe internet subscribers in Ontario and Quebec, the Alt TV service is expected to roll out to Atlantic Canada and Manitoba, although Bell has not provided a time frame. Alt TV is focused primarily on live viewing, although it does allow for catch-up viewing via an on-demand option that mimics that of a typical cable or satellite provider.

"It's always challenging when you look at a marketplace that's changing, and the question is how fast can you adapt?" says Poirtras. "We believe the industry will remain healthy and grow if the players continue to innovate, because it keeps consumers interested."

Lg2's French and English "Reporter" TV ad for the service – which debuted in June – shows news reporters taking a "breaking news" approach to an Alt TV user streaming live TV without a subscription. The spot emphasizes live sports, awards shows and breaking news, and concludes with the young man watching TV on his computer, surrounded by news cameras.

Yet even consumer interest is not enough to guarantee success. SVOD service Shomi, the much-hyped partnership between

Rogers and the former Shaw Media that was billed as a home-grown alternative to Netflix, reportedly had one million subscribers when it was abruptly shuttered late last year.

Its demise after less than two years in the market led to industry speculation that Canada is incapable of supporting a home-grown streaming service.

Rogers did not make a spokesperson available prior to publication, but CRTC chairman Jean-Pierre Blais was critical of Shomi's co-owners, questioning their decision to abandon a business he said represents "the future of content."

In a November speech before the Canadian chapter of the International Institute of Communications, Blais – never one to pull his punches during a five-year term that ended in June – wondered if Rogers and Shaw had simply grown too comfortable with subscriber revenues to bother "rolling up their sleeves" and building a business in an environment free of regulatory oversight.

But SRG's Yigit says Canadian startups are "always handicapped to some extent by smaller market economics, no matter what sector you look at."

Bell Media executives, though, seem unfazed by the prospect of competing with Netflix. The company says CraveTV has surpassed one million subscribers since its December 2014 debut, and Pearce says it experienced a slight uptick in subscribers after Shomi was shut down.

She ascribes a portion of its success to exclusive content such as *Letterkenny* – which, outside of a post-Super Bowl airing on CTV and brief promotional appearances on Comedy, is exclusive to Crave.

"It's hard to draw a straight line between a particular show and subscriptions, but we do see a bump when we release new episodes of *Letterkenny*," says Pearce. "People tend to want more than a single entertainment choice," says Pearce. "Netflix is absolutely a competitor, but I also believe [subscribers] still get huge value from CraveTV because of the content we have that they don't."

Outside of Canada, meanwhile, other media companies are increasingly catering to the seemingly insatiable consumer appetite for readily available video content.





Left, above and right: Shows like *Kim's Convenience*, *My 90-Year-Old Roommate*, *Schitt's Creek* and *The Amazing Gayle Pile* are attracting up to one million unique visitors each month to CBC's digital platforms.

Twitter recently announced the addition of 16 new live-stream partners spanning key categories like news, entertainment and sports. They include the WNBA (which will live-stream one game per week on the micro-blogging platform), and the creation of a 24/7 breaking news network for Bloomberg Media.

Facebook, meanwhile, has partnered with Major League Baseball on a deal that will see the social media giant live-stream 20 games this season, and also inked a deal with the global esports company ESL to deliver more than 5,500 hours of content to its 1.94 billion monthly active users.

"Social media channels are beginning to max out the digital ad opportunities, so they have to migrate into video," says Yigit. "It's extremely exciting and chaotic, and it's also wonderful. It's not only cannibalizing traditional TV, but it's also cross-cannibalizing itself in some ways. It's going to hit some kind of equilibrium point I'm sure, but not for another 5 to 7 years."

Other U.S. services include Sling TV (billed as a budget cable replacement), Playstation Vue, YouTube TV and Crackle (a distributor of original web series).

In Canada, Netflix remains the most popular source for SVOD content, with more than 50% of anglophones subscribing to the service according to MTM (compared with 6% for CraveTV).

Well over half (57%) of Netflix viewers say they use the service on a daily basis, with another 35% saying they use it at least once a week. Two-thirds of the time is spent watching TV shows, putting it in direct competition with broadcasters.

While Netflix continues to benefit from its first-mover advantage, Yigit is convinced that consumer demand for streaming services remains driven largely by content. "If they announced tomorrow that *Game of Thrones* [a property for which Bell has the broadcast rights] is now on Amazon Prime Video, adoption [of that service] would take off," he says.

The big question is when, or even if, a Canadian streaming service will ever be profitable. Rogers and Shaw Media reportedly lost several hundred million dollars on Shomi, and Corus Entertainment passed on acquiring Shaw Media's stake in

the service when it acquired the company for \$2.5 billion in early 2016.

Pearce declined to discuss CraveTV's financials, saying only that the two-and-a-half-year-old entity remains in startup mode. "We're happy with where we're at right now," she says.

Pearce says that unlike Shomi, which operated as a standalone entity, CraveTV has the benefit of being underwritten by Bell Media, with content from its broadcast services available via the streaming platform. "We've been able to nest Crave inside our organization to a certain extent," she says. "Like CTV, it relies on the great superstructure servicing all of our channels. That's been very helpful to our business."

Pearce says that CraveTV will be

very accommodating in that way," she says.

"We can commission something and see how it works, and if it works really well, do more of it. If we say 'That was a great experiment but it didn't really resonate with our viewers,' we can move on to the next thing. It's a lot more nimble."

Advertisers would no doubt love to have access to these services and their highly engaged audience, yet that seems like a non-starter.

A recent report said that Netflix is leaving as much as US\$2.3 billion a year on the table by refusing to carry ads, yet an informal survey of 1,200 people on Reddit found that 90% would rather pay higher subscription fees than see ads while streaming.

Bell's GO products do feature ads,



supported by a continued search for "premium TV content" originating in either the linear TV or SVOD space. She also says the company will "absolutely" commission additional original series (current Canadian exclusives on Crave include Crackle's adaptation of Guy Ritchie's 2000 crime drama *Snatch* and a pair of Hulu originals: *Shut Eye*, starring former *Burn Notice* star Jeffrey Donovan; and *Casual*, directed by Jason Reitman).

One of the benefits of the streaming space, she adds, is that it provides a canvas for experimentation largely missing from traditional TV. "You can do five episodes or three episodes that are 80 minutes each – it's

although Pearce says that ad loads differ depending on a variety of factors, including how long after the initial broadcast people are watching, as well as the media brand and the viewing platform. The CTV GO app, for example, will run anywhere from zero to three ads, depending on the content.

When asked if ads on CraveTV are a possibility, Pearce said that Bell is "always evaluating the market, as well as opportunities for the service that are consistent with a premium viewing experience."

The most likely scenario, however, sees global giant Netflix taking the lead before other OTT services follow. ■



## WHAT'S ALL THE COMPLAINING ABOUT?

In the age of PVR and programmatic, TV has never been more complex. We asked media folk if there's anything the broadcast industry should improve or do differently. Then, we took the grievances to the networks to get their response. Here's what they had to say.

BY BREE RODY-MANTHA

### PROGRAMMATIC APPROPRIATION



**THE COMPLAINT:** "The TV industry is expropriating internet terminology and applying it to their business when they talk about programmatic television. There's a distinct definition of addressability and programmatic, and that's not what they're doing, yet they use it in sales presentations. It's not machine buying and selling. Sometimes, they'll call it 'P TV,' but I think the TV industry should be careful about using that terminology until it's true programmatic. The demand side and the supply side needs to be automated. There's no way it's gonna be ready in 2017. You can't blame the broadcast industry entirely; the buyers are doing it as well."

- Rob Young, SVP, director of insights at PHD Canada



**THE RESPONSE:** "At Rogers Media, programmatic in its simplest form is the marriage of automation and data. Out of the gate we focused on our first-party data that we transform into audience segments for our platforms. As far as integrating with the buy side, we're definitely going to do it, but wanted feedback directly from buyers on where to focus our effort. Traditional broadcast traffic systems? DSPs? Both? By launching as a managed service we got to market faster and could get real feedback."

- Jon DeLaMothe, senior director, ad operations and programmatic at Rogers Media Sales

### WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT PROGRAMMATIC TV?



**THE COMPLAINT:** "For me, programmatic television doesn't make sense. If you break it down into a CPM level, there's no way you would buy it that way if you had a choice. While the automation seems like a good idea, the true role of television is not in reaching the few with specific messaging but in reaching the many, and that's what it does very well."

- Alastair Taylor, CEO at Starcom Canada



**THE RESPONSE:** "I'm inclined to agree. TV is a mass media and it can certainly be used that way. I think the challenge is that the targeting that's available through digital platforms has been so attractive to advertisers that it creates a threat to some of the ad dollars that would otherwise be spent on mass mediums. When you have television, you're reaching everyone. By adding data-enhanced television, that can help you be more selective by increasing your concentration if you don't necessarily have the budget for mass reach."

- Kristie Painting, VP digital platforms and revenue management at Bell Media



## CURRENCY CONFLICTS



**THE COMPLAINT:** "An evolution in TV measurement is due. While we look forward to the day when quality, cross-screen measurement is a reality, let's start with a couple things we believe are possible today. In digital, the ACA advocates for marketers to pay for only that which is received (net of fraud and viewability). We would like to see this with TV too, with commercial minute audiences as the currency. Commercial minute audiences are readily available, so why aren't they the currency?"

- **Judy Davey, VP of media policy and marketing capabilities at the Association of Canadian Advertisers**



**THE RESPONSE:** "I've publicly stated that we are in definite need of moving to commercial ratings. When you compare us to the rest of the marketplace in the U.S. or Europe, where rates are based off commercial ratings, we aren't there yet. That speaks to the lack of real and substantial pressure that's been put on the various players to migrate to that. The data provided by Numeris certainly allows us the capabilities, but we have to be committed to it."

- **Jean Mongeau GM and CRO at CBC**



"Personally, I see pros and cons to both. One of the cons is, if you go down to commercial pods and clusters [and] really start to get into very micro data points... you're talking about transacting against hundreds of thousands of [commercial] units. When we invoice a client or an agency, every single spot is represented in the exact time that it ran, and unit rates. Right now, the average time it takes to pay an invoice is in excess of 90 days after issuing the invoice. You can imagine if we're now adding multiple rates for multiple shows for multiple pod placements. It adds more layers of complexity that just slows the commerce down."

- **Alan Dark, SVP of sales at Rogers Media**



"Through software we can report the audiences at a specific commercial minute level, although not easily, and it's really strained by sample consideration. Trading on CMA asks for a level of accountability that is beyond what can be supported right now. But we're all in on anything that can make it an easier process in the future."

- **Mark Leslie, VP of research and consumer insights at Corus Entertainment**



## CPMS ARE NO LONGER RELEVANT

**THE COMPLAINT:** "CPMs are not created equally. We're trading for ways to understand a human connection. Naturally, if viewers are experiencing it on different devices, they're experiencing it in different ways too. We need to understand the environment, and the effect [of] that that environment. Instead of cost per impressions, why don't we track cost per human experience? I haven't really seen it in other markets, but it's absolutely achievable. It might take us five years, but we can do it if the broadcasters support the endeavour. Ultimately, this is going to help them understand the value that exists in their abundant television inventory. There would be a higher value of human experience with an audience that has less frequent consumption of a traditional channel. If there's less people watching the traditional, then what you have is a higher cost per human experience."

- **Starcom's Alastair Taylor**



**THE RESPONSE:** "The reality of the ecosystem is it's a supply and demand system. We use CPMs to effectively see where the value equation is, but if demand is up, those costs per thousands, those units rates climb very quickly. For the spring, for instance, I'm probably 30-35% higher on my rate card today in prime than I was six weeks ago. The reality is, we use CPM as a benchmark, and we look at it as a way to flatten the entire ecosystem, whether it be radio, television, digital. It's the only true comparative that we have."

- **Rogers Media's Alan Dark**



"I think the larger question is, 'How do we capture all of the variables involved in media consumption?' The media industry is very focused on audiences, on targeting, on profiling. And we're certainly not at a place where we are able to segment in such a way that we can define mass media consumption to a granular level. Looking at other elements and other angles is premature, because we still have a lot of work to do to truly reflect deep audience behaviour and consumption patterns."

- **CBC's Jean Mongeau**



# NATIONAL FALL TV SCHEDULE 2017/18 \*

Mon.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	Murdoch Mysteries		Alias Grace (Sept)/Frankie Drake (Nov)		The National	
City	Dancing with the Stars (new to City)				Scorpion	
CTV Two	Lucifer		The Gifted		The Good Doctor	
CTV Two	The Voice				The Goldbergs	Seinfeld
Global	Kevin Can Wait	9JKL	NCIS: New Orleans		The Brave	
Tues.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	Rick Mercer Report	This Hour Has 22 Minutes	Kim's Convenience	Mr. D	The National	
City	Lethal Weapon		The Mick	Brooklyn Nine-Nine	Mom	Mom
CTV	The Flash		This is Us		The Gospel of Kevin	
CTV Two	The Voice		DC's Legends of Tomorrow		The Goldbergs	Seinfeld
Global	NCIS		Bull		Law & Order True Crime: The Menendez Murders	
Wed.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	The Great British Baking Show/The Great Canadian Baking Show		The Durrells (Sept)/Top of the Lake: China Girl (Oct)		The National	
City	The Blacklist (new to City)		Modern Family	Black-ish	Mom	Mom
CTV	Criminal Minds		Law & Order: SVU		Designated Survivor	
CTV Two	The Goldbergs	American Housewife	Arrow		The Goldbergs	Seinfeld
Global	Survivor		SEAL Team		Chicago P.D.	
Thurs.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30
CBC	Dragons' Den		The Detectives		The National	



City	Bad Blood (early fall) / The Orville (late fall)		The Orville (early fall)/Mom (late fall)		Life in Pieces (late fall)	Mom	Mom
CTV	The Big Bang Theory	Young Sheldon	Gotham		How to Get Away with Murder		
CTV Two	The NFL Today		Thursday Night Football				
Global	Superstore	The Good Place	Will & Grace		Great News		
Fri.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
CBC	Marketplace	The Stats of Life (Nov)		The Fifth Estate			
City	Hell's Kitchen		The Middle	Speechless (new to City)		Mom	Mom
CTV	Blindspot		Marvel's Inhumans		Blue Bloods		
CTV Two	Once Upon a Time		The Exorcist		The Goldbergs	Seinfeld	
Global	MacGyver		Hawaii Five-0		Taken		
Sat.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
CBC	Hockey Night in Canada						
City	Hockey Night in Canada						
CTV	The Big Bang Theory	The Mayor		Law & Order: SVU	Cardinal		
CTV Two	Saving Hope		19-2		W5		
Global	Not yet announced						
Sun.	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	
CBC	The Nature of Things		Firsthand		The National		
City	TBD	Ghosted		Family Guy	The Last Man on Earth	Nirvana, The Band, The Show	Fubar: Age of the Computer
CTV	The Indian Detective		Shark Tank				
CTV Two	Football Night in America		Sunday Night Football				
Global	Wisdom of the Crowd		NCIS: L.A		Madam Secretary		

\*Note: The grid covers the national networks' schedules based on Toronto timetables (ET). Regional times for networks such as City will vary. All information is tentative and subject to change. Bold indicates new programs. New shows in red



# INSIDE SOBEYS' CROSS-COUNTRY JOURNEY

FROM A REGIONAL CHAIN TO THE COUNTRY'S SECOND-LARGEST GROCERY COMPANY, THE ATLANTIC CANADIAN RETAILER HAS SEEN MAMMOTH GROWTH IN ITS 110 YEARS.

BY MEGAN HAYNES

It all started in the Maritimes with a horse and buggy loaded with meat.

After retiring from a career in mining in 1907, J.W. Sobeys delivered meats around his local Stellarton, N.S. community before his son, Frank Sobeys, convinced him to start a shop.

Sobeys Food Store opened for business in 1924, and looked vastly different from what we see today: shoppers approached the counter to place their order, never handling the products themselves.

"When Frank opened store one, there were six

independent, family-owned grocery businesses on the same street," says Bernard Doucet, director of corporate affairs at the retailer. "Differentiation would have been at an extraordinarily personal level."

Traditional marketing efforts were sparse, but indicative of the times, including print ads and in-store contests. Bikes, dryers and new-fangled blenders were common giveaways – anything to get people in stores, says Doucet.

Product selection was local by nature, and developing one-on-one relationships with consumers and vendors



Above, clockwise: Sobeys celebrates newcomers in an anniversary spot by Gravity Partners; Frank Sobey regularly shook hands with customers; Jamie Oliver's "Better Food For All" platform; a 1963 print ad focuses on low pricing and good service; Nova Scotians line up to receive roses during an in-store contest.

was a key factor in the store's early success. Good service was a founding philosophy for Frank Sobey, who would occasionally walk the store and shake hands, Doucet says. And it was that personal touch that kept people coming back.

It's been 110 years since J.W.'s meat truck and Frank's counter store. While Sobeys has seen extraordinary growth over the past century, it owes its success to its original principles: a local focus and good service.

Within 15 years of its launch, the store had expanded to six other locations across the region before it introduced a new approach to shopping. In 1947, Sobeys revolutionized the way people in Atlantic Canada shopped, opening a "grocceteria."

Modelled after the supermarkets or "marketerias" of Central Canada and the U.S., the grocer did away with the counter format, instead asking shoppers to venture down the aisles to serve themselves before heading to the front counter to pay.

It was the first to use the format in Atlantic Canada, says Doucet. Shoppers – almost exclusively women – were invited to enter through the turnstiles at the front of the 100- by 40-foot store, leaving their baby carriages behind, and grab a grocery buggy. Products were grouped by category, allowing "the housewife [to] make her own choice of the different varieties and grades,"



according to a newspaper article explaining the process. Thousands of people streamed through the store just to see what the fuss was about.

"We take it for granted today, but at the time it was hugely innovative," Doucet says. Sobeys also introduced the first automated door in Canada in 1947, and the house label – self-titled as "Sobeys" – in the '50s. While PR wasn't exactly mainstream at the time, Frank Sobey recognized innovation as a draw, says Doucet.

By the 1960s, the company was achieving sales in excess of \$22 million (equating to \$174 million today). The grocer had a presence across Atlantic Canada, with 48 stores, by far the region's dominant player.

In the '70s, the brand began exploring TV advertising and introduced the four-ball logo, with each ball meant to symbolize a brand attribute: quality, honesty, value and modernity, says Doucet. The colours – orange and green – represented clean food.

Sobeys hit its next major milestone in 1987. That year, the brand made a more concerted effort to venture outside of Eastern Canada (beyond the Maritimes, it had a handful of locations scattered across Quebec), setting up shop for the first time in the coveted Ontario market. It also achieved sales in excess of \$1 billion, experimented with touch screens (the "touch-sensitive screens" at the front of the store offered recipes, meal suggestions and coupons) and launched its first iconic ad, which would resonate with Maritimers for years to come.

"Star of Christmas," created by agencies Clary Flemming & Associates, Quincepts Production and Citadel Communications, featured a gaggle of giddy kids, with shots of Sobeys staff peppered in. It introduced the "Star of Christmas" carol, written by musician Bob Quinn and sung by local children. "It's hard to put into words how iconic that commercial is in Atlantic Canada," Doucet says.

Indeed, the campaign – which was brought out of retirement in 2016 with an updated carol and video – has had a lasting legacy in the region. In the late '80s, a boy once wrote to Santa asking for a cassette of the song (the letter was published in a Halifax newspaper). Maritimers have twice named the spot the best Christmas commercial ever.



More recently, CBC devoted an entire “oral history” piece on the ad. “Star of Christmas” was quintessentially Atlantic Canadian and epitomized the “down-home” feel of the brand, Quinn told the CBC. “Sobeys went through quite a transition about 10 years ago when they started expanding nationally, and corporate thinking came into it and pushed out the family thinking,” he said.

Indeed, the brand began shifting its approach to marketing in the '90s as it expanded across the country in earnest. It was no longer the dominant player, but rather a smaller competitor in a vastly different marketing landscape. It also had to contend with a stronger presence from Loblaw's, which was making a concerted push into the Atlantic Canada region and successfully taking share from Sobeys.

By the mid-'90s, product and price began to play a bigger role in marketing. For example, Sobeys' “So Satisfying” platform focused on low pricing, backed up with weekly specials in stores. Another campaign featured a pair of boys frantically eating Sobeys' in-house chips while watching a horror movie.

Amid competition from Loblaw's President's Choice label, Sobeys rejigged its private label line, renaming it Our Best in the hopes of also taking share away from IGA's Our Compliments line. (The two retailers later merged, dropping Our Best for Our Compliments, and then later renaming the line as “Compliments” after Sobeys acquired IGA parent co. The Oshawa Group in 1998.) It also introduced Signal, a lower-cost private label line to compete against Loblaw's No Name brand.

But despite the 110 stores across Eastern Canada, the brand struggled to find its foothold in Ontario and Quebec, where Loblaw and IGA were dominant. Sobeys maintained the top spot in Atlantic Canada – holding roughly 40% market share in the region throughout the '90s, but failed to make much of a dent elsewhere.

It wasn't until parent company Empire acquired the Oshawa Group – owners of IGA and Price Choppers (rebranded later as FreshCo) – that Sobeys achieved the scale it had hoped for.

The \$1.5 billion sale (\$2.1 billion today)



tripled the company's size and forced it to decide whether to rename all the stores under the Sobeys banner.

“It was a fork in the road for our brand,” says Liam Sobeys, director of category management optimization, and grandson of Frank Sobeys. Quebecers had a strong affinity for the IGA brand and the chain had managed to avoid competing on price, he says. Shopping bills may have been higher, but the IGA brand was never lacking in strong sales.

Parent company Empire decided to maintain the two separate brands, and marketing activities were split between chains. Communication efforts – already managed separately across regions – were even more decentralized, and there was little consistency, even within the Sobeys banner. So, in 2001, the company hired Roxanne Pearce as VP national marketing, with the goal of creating a more unified marketing approach.

Driven largely by competition from Costco and Walmart, price was the de facto marketing platform for many grocery brands, says Pearce, who is now an independent marketing strategist. Researchers found there was an opportunity for consumers who were, indeed, concerned about price, but also wanted service and quality. With a marketing campaign that harkened back to Frank Sobeys' original mandate around customer service, the brand introduced a new tagline in 2003: “Ready To Serve” launched across TV, radio, print and in-store, with a lightly re-designed logo (creative was by the late Maria Kennedy, then-president of Karacters).

The staff was retrained to focus on service, while in-store signage offered new ways to think about food: freeze watermelon for a nutritious ice cube, or purée tomatoes in place of salad dressing.

Television spots, created by DDB, rolled out nationally and focused on the brand's commitment to service. One introduced “runners” – employees who would fetch food for customers waiting in line (though it worked in theory, it never really took off, says Pearce).

“[‘Ready To Serve’] is one of the brand's most enduring taglines,” says Lyne

**Left:** Sobeys enlisted Oliver to travel the country and spread its better food movement; new Canadians are shown bringing "beauty, laughter, pride" to the country in Sobeys' birthday spots, with a nod to founder J.W. Sobeys; an internal campaign featured employees sharing their own immigration stories.

Castonguay, chief merchandising officer. "We've [since] changed the slogan, but it remains scattered in a few stores throughout the country."

Indeed, share grew by 0.2% across the country one year after the "Ready to Serve" launch – a significant bump in the crowded and competitive market. But shifting consumer palettes motivated the company to revisit its approach to marketing again in 2011. The brand undertook four studies, delving into consumer insights across the country. This time, it came out with "Better Food For All."

The brand platform, which continues to this day, encourages consumers to eat better, feel better and do better, Castonguay says. It was based on the insight that across the country, consumers want to be healthier, and Sobeys can play a role in helping them.

To promote the new positioning, Sobeys partnered with chef Jamie Oliver to target three consumer segments: "fresh food enthusiasts" (40-to-55-year-old high-income earners who are less value-conscious), "fresh and savvy consumers" (25- to 35-year-olds who are more value-conscious) and "packaged meal lovers" (single young adults and young professionals who are time-starved).

Working with Rethink and Jungle Media, the TV campaign launched in 2013 and followed Oliver as he travelled the country delivering healthy food options to unsuspecting homeowners.

The new platform rolled out amid Empire's acquisition of the Safeway chain in Western Canada. In a \$5.8-billion deal, the company added 181 Safeway locations and finally achieved a foothold across the entire country (save the territories).

Despite the decision to operate the brands independently, the teams share certain national programs, and Compliments replaced some Safeway in-house brands (as a result of duplication and because Sobeys was unable to hold the license to certain trademarks from the former owner).

Sobeys also took the opportunity to streamline the myriad loyalty programs it accumulated: Central Canada's Club Sobeys program and Safeway's Club Card were dropped in favour of Air Miles, which was being used in Atlantic Canada. It was not well received.

Castonguay puts some of the blame on the speed of communication: "It's not that they thought the product was bad. But I think our transition and how we communicated to [consumers] that we're moving from



# 110 YEARS

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Fish out of Water Design Inc.

one product to another was probably not as clear as it should have been," she says.

The retailer is also doing some internal streamlining, Castonguay says, as there is a fair bit of duplication in certain roles across banners and within the Sobeys chain. High on her priority list is a single point of contact for vendors, who currently have to deal with the grocery chains on a regional and banner basis.

The team is also looking to collaborate across banners, she adds, pointing to a recent soup push that originated from the Safeway chain and is now being utilized across Sobeys stores. The product launch included the rollout of fresh soups across the country, with flavours based on regional favourites (derived from local shopper data). The soups are available for immediate consumption and on shelves for customers to take home and eat.

It's part of a growing trend, in which shoppers are looking for healthier, ready-made meals in place of traditional centre-store products. Infused waters, fresh-cut fruits and veg, and healthier prepared meals will play a larger part in Sobeys' merchandising and marketing strategy going forward, she says.


Digital grocery, too, is a bigger focus. It's moving slowly into online shopping, leaning heavily on IGA

(which has operated an online store for 20-plus years) before Sobeys commits to a single omnichannel avenue.

Finally, Castonguay says there's more room for brand boasting in Sobeys' future, pointing to the 110th birthday celebration coinciding with Canada's 150th.

Working with Gravity Partners (digital and creative), UM (media), High Road (PR), Fish Out Of Water Design (in-store) and Clothesline Media (internal marketing), the brand is rolling out a multi-platform campaign. A special logo blending Sobeys' and Canada's anniversaries and birthday-themed products (cookies, maple-leaf shaped burgers, etc.) are rolling out across all banners (only the Sobeys locations get the special 110 branding, though).

On a mass scale, the brand is working with Halifax's immigration museum, Pier 21, to get employees to submit their stories of immigration or growing up in Canada, with a social push encouraging others to do the same. That content will be leveraged in a TV campaign this fall to emphasize Sobeys' place in Canada's history.

"In the background, we haven't been loud about these things," Castonguay says. "But I want us to be best in class. I want to be quicker with our messages. I want us to take swings and to not be afraid to try things that don't work." 



**sobeys**

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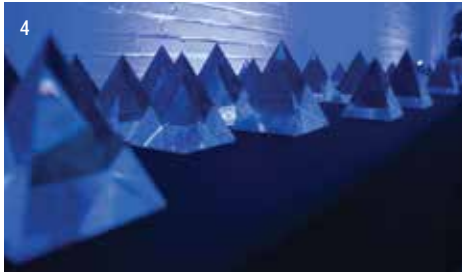
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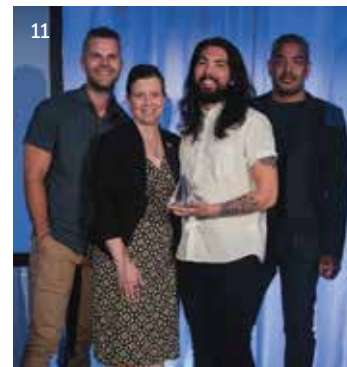
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## AToMiC | 2017

A number of high-impact cause campaigns won big at the 2017 AToMiC Awards, held at Toronto's District 28 on May 31. Cossette and SickKids took home the Grand Prix and four Golds for the powerful "VS" campaign, while Rethink made the most trips to the podium, with nine wins for six campaigns. Read about all the winners at [atomicawards.strategyonline.ca](http://atomicawards.strategyonline.ca).



1. Publicis' Max Valiquette announced the evening's winners, delivering zingers along the way. | 2. Ogilvy's Robyn Hutman, Chris Williamson and Kennedy Crawford pick up a Gold and Silver for Huggies' "No Baby Unhugged." | 3. FCB's Gira Moin and Kelly Michaelov with their trophies. | 4. The AToMiC Awards recognize ideas and programs that mix advertising and entertainment. | 5. Starcom's Steve Meraska and Christine Saunders. | 6. Rethink's Catherine Dumas, Jake Bundock and Andrew Chhour. | 7. The Cossette and SickKids team with their awards haul at the post-show cocktail. | 8. Cossette's Carlos Moreno collects the Grand Prix for the SickKids "VS" campaign. | 9. Rethink's Dre Labre and Aaron Starkman with one of their (many) awards. | 10. UM's Juan Panilio accepts a New Establishment Media Award, recognizing exceptional work in the field. | 11. The team from Mosaic, Children's Wish and Partners Film pick up a prize for #DoTheLivi.

ALL PHOTOS BY EMILY SILVERMAN-CUMMINS



# A cage match between art and science

BY LANCE SAUNDERS

**A**s the industry transforms, the debate *du jour* is around the creative tug-of-war between art and science. In the last few years, the pendulum has definitely shifted from the art and intuition side to the prove-it-to-me-first science side.

In one corner of this cage match is the science-based-decision-making MBA marketer, and in the other corner is the emotionally driven, intuitive, charismatic “Trust me, I’m an executive creative director” agency representative.

The reality is that, given the pressure on brands to deliver results, often with declining marcom dollars, no CEO or CFO is going to approve campaigns based on faith versus facts. However, once you declare you are on the science side of the ledger – that the world of marketing (like science) is about empirical evidence and not based on instincts and beliefs – then you should apply this thinking to your entire marketing decision-making system. You cannot cherry-pick which empirical evidence to believe, or search for alternative facts – even if it challenges the core of your current belief system.

The empirical evidence regarding how we, as consumers, decide to buy is now irrefutable and based solely on emotion, not rationality.



**LANCE SAUNDERS** is national president and chief operating officer at DDB Canada.

This is not the ranting and raving of a hungover ECD in a Cannes breakout salon on creativity. This is brain science. The playbook that we have all used, written back in the 1960s by the CPG giants and focused on the importance



of reasoned messaging, is not how communication works – in truth, it may have never worked that way.

Psychologist Daniel Kahneman, who received a Nobel Prize in Economics for his understanding of how brains are wired, once said, “We think much less than we think we think” and that “up to 95 per cent of decisions we make are emotional decisions.”

Similarly, Canadian neurologist Donald Calne wrote that “the essential difference between emotion and reason is that emotion leads to action while reason leads to conclusion.”

Consequently, from a marketing perspective, the more people feel, the more they buy; and the more they feel, the more likely they are willing to pay more. Facts tell. Emotions sell.

So, if 95% of the decisions we make are emotional, why do so many Canadian marketers think their particular category falls into the 5% of rational decision-making and choose to include all of their brand’s facts, features and benefits?

Our brain is made up of two systems, with decision-making processing in system one, which is fast, intuitive and reactionary, and not in system two, which deliberates, reasons, analyzes and

post-rationalizes our irrational decision-making. In fact, system one is 220,000 times more powerful than system two – how’s that for ROI?

There is no question that there is a role for facts. If you are category challengers like Uber, Spotify, Airbnb and Netflix, the facts work wonderfully. But for the bulk of brands and services, which are more similar than they are different, this isn’t the most effective approach. Facts are indeed important, but at different points on the customer path-to-purchase – usually lower down in the purchase funnel.

We need to stop worrying about what is the ownable message and concentrate on what is the ownable emotion, or the emotive reaction we want to illicit from our communications.

Adam&EveDDB’s Les Binet partnered with Peter Field to write *Marketing in the Era of Accountability*, which analyzed 800-plus cases from the U.K. IPA database. Their empirical, evidence-based conclusion was that, “emotional campaigns build stronger brands” and are “more efficient,” meaning that in this world of smaller budgets, the stronger the emotional connection you have with your audience, the less you need to spend on share of voice. And with regards to profitability, emotions make more money.

In the Binet and Field study, rational-led campaigns performed the worst, delivering big profit gains in only 16% of the cases. Twenty six per cent of campaigns that were both emotional and rational had profit gains, while emotional-based campaigns performed the highest with 31% of the cases turning a profit.

If marketing is going through profound changes, and if a rising tide does indeed lift all boats, we need to help each other and evolve people’s thinking so that our industry arrives at a much more useful place than where we started.



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Jason Last and Niall Kelly from CONFLICT imagine what it would look like if AI programmed a fully optimized fall TV lineup using ratings data, cross-genre story arcs, and a little sizzle.



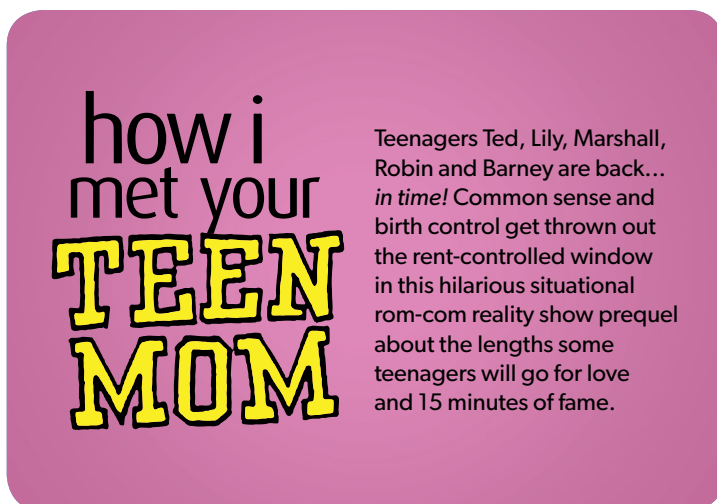
Beloved American cartoon family trades their house in the burbs for a California roadhouse in this episodic tale of an outlaw biker gang gone nuclear. D'oh!



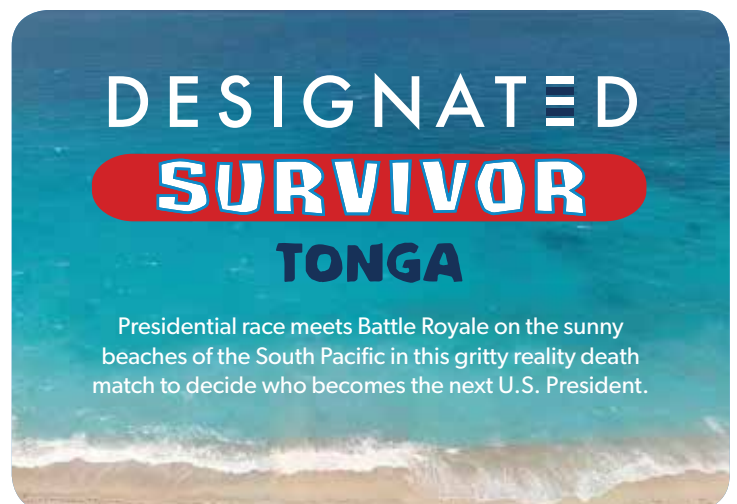
Minimum security meets maximum technology in this noir dramedy about women grappling with the unanticipated consequences of incarceration, a hyper-connected world, and occasional girl-on-girl action in the prison chapel.



Cut it out! The gang is back. But with too much hijinks for one home, TV's favorite sitcom family sets their eyes on a move to the White House. Hilarity ensues as Uncle Jesse runs for POTUS, Stephanie Tanner pins a murder on Senator Rose, and Kimmy Gibbler 'accidentally' starts a war with North Korea. Have mercy!



Teenagers Ted, Lily, Marshall, Robin and Barney are back... *in time!* Common sense and birth control get thrown out the rent-controlled window in this hilarious situational rom-com reality show prequel about the lengths some teenagers will go for love and 15 minutes of fame.



Presidential race meets Battle Royale on the sunny beaches of the South Pacific in this gritty reality death match to decide who becomes the next U.S. President.



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