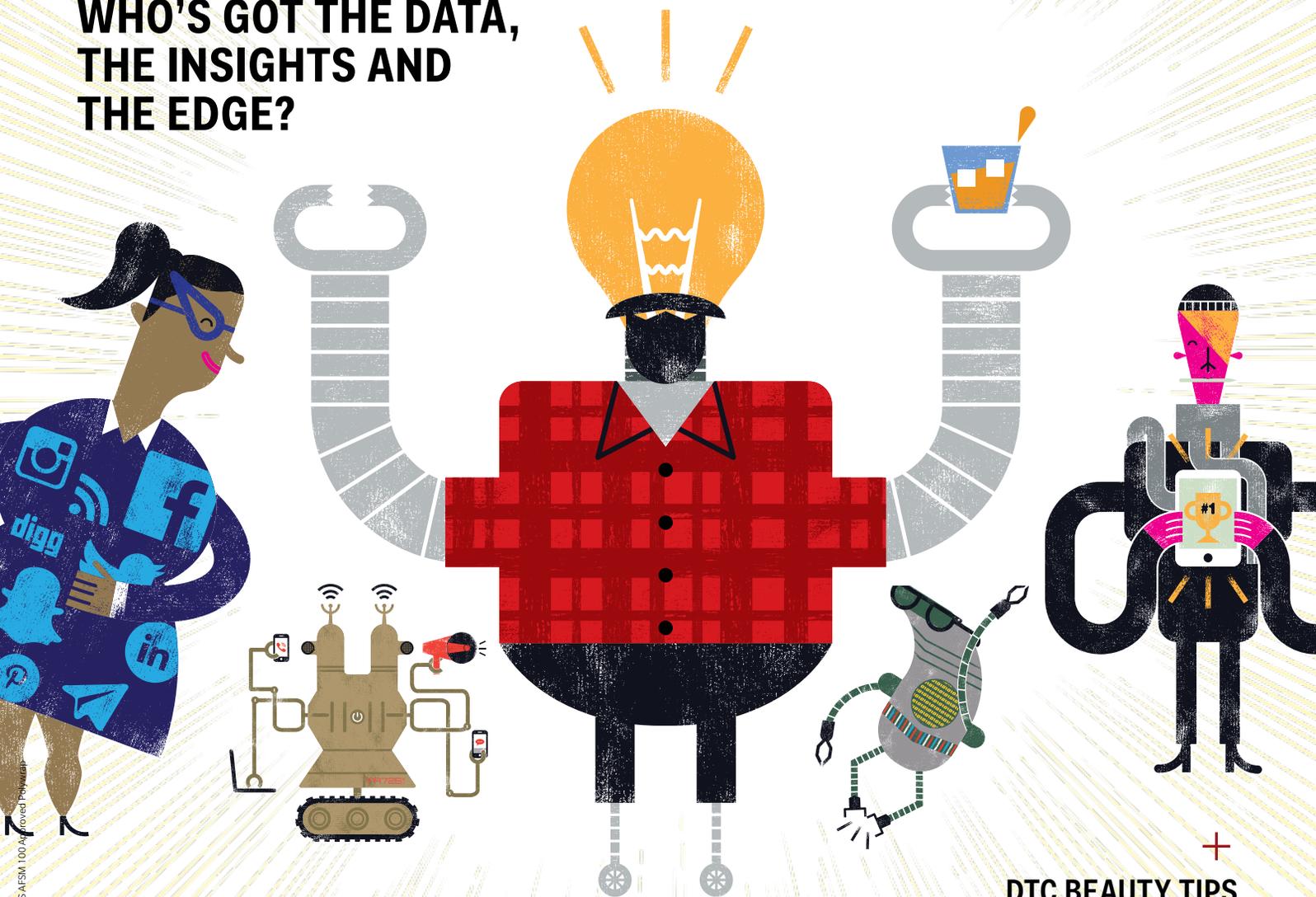


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AGENCY OF THE YEAR

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PLAYBACK



An ambitious 13-minute film for Koho was created by this year's Gold AOY winner, Cossette.

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Digital beauty

Disruptive and direct, online-first startups give traditional mass brands tips on how to go DTC.

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40 years of No Frills

The discount grocer is building on its utilitarian approach with a brash campaign that celebrates being savvy, not cheap.

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Agency of the Year

Eighteen awards were given to 15 agencies, judged to be the *crème de la crème* by a jury of industry peers.

4 Editorial Awards and agency model shifts • **8 Upfronts** How to weather a CEO storm, discovering which cultural trends have strategic value, plus words of wisdom from AdWeek NYC • **69 The New Establishment** Inaugural brand winners from Tim Hortons and Budweiser • **72 MES and Strategy Awards** Visual highlights from the future-proofing event and insights-driven awards show • **74 Back Page Arrivals+Departures** reminds us people are still the heart of great work.



ON THE COVER: Illustrator extraordinaire Matthew Daley dreamed up the five Agency of the Year competitions as robotic characters that are transforming to the needs of shifting client demands. Each android is artfully tied to one of the five fields that make up AOY. A platform-neutral Media doyenne, a multi-device (and megaphone) wielding PR machine, a whisky-toting (or is it bourbon that gets Creative juices flowing?) hipsterbot, a Digital droid and the ubiquitous tentacles of Design comprise the new data-and-tech fuelled agency dream team. Go ahead, find out who the real winners are behind the icons...

The winds of change

Agency of the Year is when we get to play catch-up on agency affairs. Reporting on the industry through StrategyDaily affords us with a macro look at the agency landscape. Watching from the sidelines, we get to see all the exciting transformation unfold.

Based on that year-long review, we can almost always predict the narrative underpinning the profiles of agency winners. Upon receiving the *top-secret* list, our covert journalists seek out conversations with Canada's top shops, asking the hard questions around how they're minimising the impact of future disruption.

They hear it all. And sometimes more than once.

One year, shops in the winners' circle are focusing on breaking down silos to integrate. The next, they're putting strategists and planners in the limelight.

Tradigital marketing. Content production. Innovation hubs. And let's not forget big data. These are some of agencies' favourite new offerings in their growing future-proofing arsenal.

While the trend will always be to add or subtract until the client offering equation is just right, this year saw a new North Star appear for agencies: making that shift from campaign-builder to problem-solver.

Agencies are aspiring to solve seemingly unsolvable problems – or looking for hidden problems – through the art of intelligence.

For starters, double AOY winner John St. has a new predicative brand mapping model that broadens its scope beyond creative problems. OMD, which takes the Silver in Media, is using marketing science and data to build “performance” clients. And the top Agency of the Year (and Silver Design shop), Cossette, is working side-by-side with clients to ID meaty business problems.

Swimming upstream with brands through consultancy-style offerings is on the lips of many agencies as they question their future client relationships. But before they can swim that sea, some are learning to paddle the waters by becoming a specialist.

Every year we speak with top Digital winner FCB (this is its third Gold win), we learn more about its efforts to build a tech niche. Starting slowly with agency-wide Google Adwords certification three years ago, to now building a voice/AI practice inside a new studio, FCB is building that foundation using the bricks of knowledge. Because, as more platforms – or complex solutions for complex problems – begin to emerge, you can bet CMOs will be calling on the experts.

So while 2018 was not without the all-familiar feeling of *deja vu*, the agencies across these pages have certainly brought an air of change. And as shops look to succeed their rebirth (with each year requiring more shifting and shaping to keep up), I'd like to leave you with a quote from the elusively brilliant Elon Musk that implores you to solve problems not based on prior assumptions and best practices: “I do think there's a good framework for thinking. It is physics. You know, the sort of first principles reasoning... boil things down to their fundamental truths and reason up from there.”

Jennifer Horn, editor



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

To make things better, make better things

WHAT A YEAR...

Even the normally sanguine, roll-with-the-punches people who have seen it all before found the pace (and degree) of change rocking the industry this year to be bananas.

So making the 2018 shortlist is extra significant. Staying relevant is getting closer to that thing people used to joke that advertising wasn't: rocket science.

And yet, despite seismic market upheaval and a high-tech arsenal of tools at marketers' disposal, what's at the core is still solving problems... creatively.

At AdWeek in New York this year, the burning issues had old roots but new urgency.

Discussions that used to be about going with your gut versus testing, are now about being ready for a sonic revolution. "If you're not at the table you're on the menu" was an exact quote from an IBM Watson session. The debate about who gets a seat at the table is now about moving beyond old working models/power balances to finding new solutions from new voices... PR is now media, and media is now strategy and absolutely everyone owns digital and design and creative.

So where does that leave AOY distinctions? Right in the middle of all the morphing, spotting the best ideas across disciplines, with PR shops entering Digital and Creative AOY, and Design as a skill that creative agencies are increasingly relying on across all fronts.

The portfolios that brought agencies to the top of the shortlist are the product of new thinking

and different approaches, and the Campaigns of the Year – the top scoring cases from across all the AOY entries – typify the new advertising. Digital campaign of the year "Destination Pride" by FCB for PFLAG and Touche's Media campaign of the year "A Room With Many Views" for Quebec Tourism both tap data in new ways to tell stories that resonate with specific audiences.

That was a frequent point made on the New York stages. "Stop marketing to the average" and "relentless helpfulness" was advice from a convo between JPMorgan Chase CMO Kristin Lemkau and Google president Allan Thygesen on tapping data and the power of machine learning. Seth Godin advocated serving "the smallest viable audience," warning brands to "quit strip-mining the internet, treat it like water in the desert" and to "make things better, make better things."

That mantra was delivered on by the top Design entry, Sid Lee's "Bulletproof Flag" for Black Lives Matter and Narrative's "Break Bread Smash Stigma," the top PR campaign; both bring powerful insights to life to make issues more tangible and undeniably social.

This work is the type of thing Jeff Goodby was prescribing in his "How Vandalism Will Save Advertising" talk. Citing stats that peg agency morale as low to dangerously low and dropping, with 70% looking for new jobs, he made a case for more mischief, taking more things in-house, weaponizing CMOs and running towards fire as an antidote

– with end-products like "Rainbow Doritos" and the "Unacceptable Acceptance Letters" campaigns.

And from the advertising AOY shortlist the "#Haulers" campaign from John St. came out on top. It's the evolution of a bold brand built 40 years ago, and shows that how you get the word out may change, but a distinct foundation can stand the test of time.

The growing focus on ongoing content marketing programs means brands face a litmus test every day. Every time they "content," the legs of the brand, and how far consumers are willing to come along for the ride is tested. Reflecting that challenge, this year the AToMiCoN lens is what's at the core of the best of those programs – so give us a shout if you have a story to share.

There's also been a big jump in brands bringing agency roles in-house this year (20% more in the last five years per an ANA study). That may be handy for ongoing tasks, but there's an expertise, an arms-length POV – the spirit of vandalism on one hand and a gut check on the other – that's needed now more than ever, and it resides in the agencies in this issue. Optimization is the new grail, just don't lose sight of the "making something as good as possible" side of the effectiveness equation.

Cheers, mm

Mary Maddever, SVP/Publisher

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RISING ABOVE CEO DRAMA

By Melissa Dunne

A CEO is *part* of the brand, but a CEO is not *the* brand. CEOs seem to be having public downfalls at a stunning clip this year. Brandon Truaxe, founder and former CEO of Toronto-based beauty brand Deciem, was shown the door in October after posting yet another questionable Instagram video. Elon Musk was forced to step down as chairman of Tesla after braggadocious tweets triggered SEC reprisals (although he remained CEO as of press time).

Marketing and comms teams “play a big role” in whether a company sinks or soars after a public C-suite shakeup, says Wojtek Dabrowski, crisis management expert and founder of Provident Communications.

To prevent misguided tweets from going viral, Dabrowski says CMOs should be in on talks regarding execs’ social media use from the get-go so they can spring into action if things go awry.

And CMOs should remember they “have to protect the brand and its reputation ahead of one person,” even if that person started the company, says David Soberman, Canadian national chair in strategic marketing at the University of Toronto’s Rotman School of Management.

Company founders like Truaxe and Musk will always be part of their brand’s story, notes David Ian Gray, founder of retail advisory firm DIG360. Lululemon, which Gray has followed for years, is a great example of a company that has seen many CEOs come and go since its founding in 1998. Despite the public gaffes of Lulu’s founder and ex-CEO, Chip Wilson, the Vancouver retailer is doing better than ever reaching record high stock prices recently, notes Gray.

Once a brand is selling something people really want (like yoga wear) they’re likely to buy the products despite the leadership, says Soberman.

The key is dealing with a public CEO crisis quickly, says Dabrowski. Then CMOs can return to talking about the brand, not the CEO.

PHOTO: ANDREW WORLEY

SLASHING THROUGH CULTURAL TRENDS

By Justin Dallaire

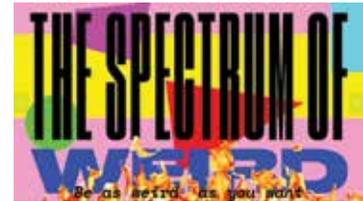
To understand Backslash, picture a stormy sea.

Observing the horizon, it’s easy to become “obsessed with the whitecaps,” says Mark Tomblin, chief strategy officer at Juniper Park\TBWA, referring to short-term cultural fads disguised as wider trends. True marketing gold, he says, rests in the deeper currents that displace large amounts of water from below the surface.

Backslash’s strategy unit and content studio embedded within the TBWA Worldwide network of agencies, launched in 2016, aims to decipher the whitecaps from the currents, so that it can leverage the latter during every phase of creative development, from big-picture brand strategy down to individual marketing campaigns.



Left: Images of trend-watching work by Backslash. Right: Juniper Park\TBWA was inspired by “edges” for its Simplii Financial work.



Juniper Park\TBWA recently put this approach to work when it launched Simplii Financial, the online-only bank owned by client CIBC.

“Clients often see their competition very narrowly,” says Tomblin. While brands have always competed for consumers’ attention, Backslash was born out of the realization that culture itself has become a competitor. “I’m not just talking about cat videos,” he says. “I’m talking about the way people see the world, which has become much broader.”

A global network of 300 strategists and creatives known as “spotters,” including seven

Canadians, submit cultural “triggers” to a Backslash team in Los Angeles, which checks them against a database of pre-existing trends. The team turns them into daily insight videos and feeds them back into the network for use on client work. After being shared, the films are aggregated in a clickable content archive accessible to anyone with a TBWA email address.

To date, TBWA global chief strategy officer Nick Barham says the team has validated 60 global cultural trends – which it refers to as “edges” – from the “rise of the machines” and sustainable living, to wellness and female empowerment. “We’re not saying this is the entire universe of culture,” he says. “We’re saying this is our best guess today.”

Tomblin says it used four cultural “edges” to decide how to position Simplii against other digital-only banks: “authenticity”; the “convenience economy”; the desire to live a simpler, less intense life; and the need to slow things down in response to the disposability of modern life.

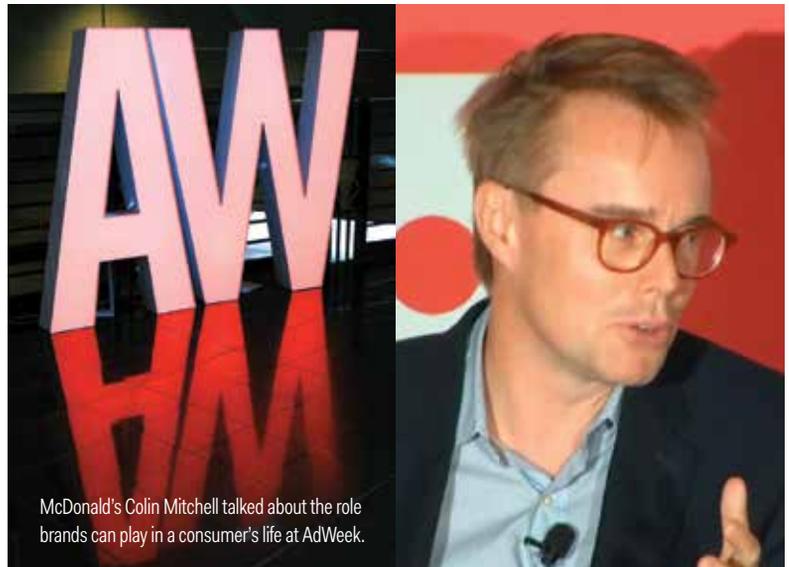
While it may be difficult to draw a direct line between these insights and the Simplii brand – the exception being its name, which hints at “simplicity” – traces of them can be found in its September launch campaign, which featured a man struggling to juggle four balls as a woman juggled two with ease, drawing a link to the red dots in Simplii’s logo. More



recently, the brand has been running “Travel Easy” social videos, including one encouraging travellers to book a pod hotel (“a typical hotel, simplified”) for their next adventure.

It’s not the first millennial-friendly positioning to be spelled out for a brand, admits Tomblin: “The point is, the edges allow you to come at it in a culturally interesting way.”

Jill Nykoliati, CEO of Juniper Park\TBWA, adds that Backslash has helped the agency provide Canadian clients with context they “would never have gotten on [their] own” as “they don’t have the bandwidth to step outside, but they know they need to.” Ideally, she adds, the process “starts at the very beginning of the brand’s purpose, lifts it up to a much richer, human level, rather than a product level.”



McDonald’s Colin Mitchell talked about the role brands can play in a consumer’s life at AdWeek.

OVERHEARD AT ADWEEK NY

By Josh Kolm

Diversity, data and doing social good were frequent topics of discussion during AdWeek New York this year, but some did a better job than others at driving their ideas home. For anyone who wasn’t there, here are a few speaker quotes to take with you as 2018 comes to a close.

“The essence of [the original Big Mac jingle] is participation. That is increasingly the secret; getting people to actually take part in our campaigns. But at very low levels, because I think we overestimate how involved people actually want to be [in ad campaigns].”

Colin Mitchell, global VP of brand for McDonald’s, on what he deems is the brand’s best ad.

“Advertising is already a bit suspect. If people think you are just trying to grab onto that political gesture, or that cause, or that public sentiment on behalf of selling more stuff, it looks insincere. Only do it if it’s truly in your soul as a brand that you think you need to say this, not as some kind of advertising stunt.”

Lee Clow, chairman and global director of TBWA, on brands jumping on social causes.

“The losers are the companies who only conceptualize their consumer as a place to extract data, instead of a target you’re serving. Maybe we can work with consumers to help them understand the implication of giving consent for data collection, because they don’t right now, and the winners will be those who take the responsibility to do that.”

Claudio Flores Thomas, AVP at Lexia Insights, on how to approach data collection post-GDPR.

“Companies undermine the importance of context to a situation. The classic way of doing segmentation is to say something like, ‘This person likes healthy living.’ But the person who is healthy in the morning might behave differently at night when there’s wine and dessert in front of them.”

Jennie Liu, ED at Yale’s Center for Customer Insights, on the importance of understanding consumer behaviour.



LONG LIVE THE (DIGITAL) BEAUTY REGIME

Consumers are forgoing traditional retail channels and buying direct from brands. The result has been a boom in hip/cool/totally digital upstarts that are building one-to-one relationships with shoppers. And as more companies – from online grocer Brandless to sustainable toothbrush Boie – begin to break into the crowded consumer market, legacy lines and traditional CPG companies are embracing their own direct-to-consumer channels. But building a DTC strategy goes beyond e-commerce – and few know how to build better one-to-one relationships than the PR-courting/buzz-worthy/pop-up-happy beauty brands.

BY MEGAN HAYNES

Shiseido Canada plans to ring in 2019 with a new business unit, dipping its toes in the direct-to-consumer (DTC) world. The Japanese beauty company, which counts Laura Mercier and Nars among its brands, will begin launching Canadian e-commerce sites beginning early next year. For the launch, the local operations are taking learnings from the U.S. team (which have operated a DTC channel for a few years) and the goal, says Elaine Shigeishi, VP sales and marketing, is to build out the community of brand acolytes here in Canada.

The direct-to-consumer channel will not only help reinforce brand loyalty, she says, it will also provide first-party data the company wouldn't be able to collect through retail partners. This will help the nearly 150-year-old brand create personalized marketing materials, and also inform future R&D.

Specifically, for the launch of the Shiseido makeup line (long only offered as a skincare regime), the research and development team in the U.S. turned to the brand's social community and combed through product reviews on the site. Weightlessness and soft texture came up as repeated beloved attributes of the brand, Shigeishi says, so the new product line was specifically designed with those two features in mind.

The line, which launched in the summer, has already seen early success, she says, and her hope is that the Canadian audience will also help inform future product developments, creating a feedback loop.

But more than building out loyalty and setting up future product launches for success, the reality is that when it comes to DTC, brands need to be there. “Digital is just how consumers are shopping today,” says Shigeishi.

Consumers have become more at ease buying everything from razors to cars to groceries online, and it’s causing a sea-change – not only in how we buy, but what we buy as well.

A 2018 IAB study found that people are shifting away from buying from large multinational corporations towards smaller boutique brands and digital startups (think Dollar Shave Club, Frank And Oak, or Clearly). And the trend is across categories – while once it seemed impossible to buy fresh vegetables, or even a mattress online, companies like Endy and Chef’s Plate have shown that it can be done.

Yet despite the potential of DTC, plenty of major brands offer only shells of e-commerce sites – if they have anything at all. IAB found that only 7% of “legacy” brands sell a “significant” amount of their product offering direct-to-consumers, with 38% not selling anything direct at all.

But it’s a huge missed opportunity – and one that could cost companies billions.

The IAB report found that small- and medium-sized CPG represented 64% of online sales in 2016, up from just 39% the year before. And that same year, 90 of the top 100 CPG brands lost market share, despite the overall growth trend of 6%, according to a report from U.S.-based Catalina. The share thief, the research firm found, was direct-to-consumer brands.

But it can be done: more so than almost any other category – save for technology – beauty consumers are increasingly turning to digital channels to inform their purchasing power, says NPD Group analyst Amy Chung. And the category offers a glimpse for marketers at the potential for DTC.

A 2017 study of American women by A.T. Kearney found that 55% of female shoppers were very comfortable buying beauty products online; and another 35%, despite only ever making in-store purchases, were heavily influenced by what they read online. All told, 67% of women consulted four or more websites when making a beauty buying decision, the report found.

And there are plenty of start-up brands poised to capitalize on this trend: cult favs like Glossier, IT Cosmetics or Canadian cos like Deciem (makers of the Abnormal Beauty Company and The Ordinary) and Nudestix are succeeding with their digital-first approach, and traditional mass brands, much like Shiseido, are racing to catch up.

In Canada, premium, prestige and specialty beauty brands (of which these digital-first start-ups tend to fall) are growing incredibly fast, says Chung. According to NPD stats, the category saw 9% year-over-year growth (compared to just 2% in the

beauty category overall), and was set to hit \$2.5 billion by year’s end. (Canadians also love e-commerce, she adds: 80% reported purchasing something online in the last six months and digital sales were up 14% year-over-year, compared to bricks-and-mortar, which was only up 1%.)

Larger CPG brands have taken notice, with many going on acquisition sprees in recent years to tap into that popularity. In 2016, L’Oreal purchased cult skincare brand IT Cosmetics for \$1.2 billion; Unilever has been on a premium- and specialty-product hunt for



Above and left: Yves St. Laurent has been taking design cues from digi brands.

the past two years, purchasing the likes of Schmidt’s Naturals (deodorant), Sundial Brands (bath and skincare), Carver Korea (skincare) and Hourglass Cosmetics (prestige makeup); P&G picked up First Aid Beauty (skincare) in 2018; Estée Lauder acquired a 28% stake in the \$300 million-a-year Deciem. Brandon

Truaxe, Deciem’s founder, was recently ousted after he unceremoniously closed the brand’s stores without notice, so the DTC acquisition path is not all roses.

To understand why these upstart brands are reaching global status, it’s important to break down the consumer and business trends currently shaping the industry.

From a category perspective, beauty – particularly in mature markets like Canada – was ripe for a revolution, says Marty Weintraub, partner and national retail consultant, Deloitte. Even with the entrance of U.S. players like Nordstrom and Saks in Canada, the relevance of a luxury department store, and its typically large beauty counter offering, is waning. With those stores exerting much less influence on the beauty market, there are few retailers – Sephora and some Shoppers Drug Marts – that offer premium, prestige or specialty beauty products on a national scale. With a growing demand for non-mass market brands, there are few places where the majority of Canadian shoppers can actually make a purchase. Enter digital-first brands (which, to be fair, have Sephora to thank, as it’s played a major part in boosting the reach of many of these lines).

It’s comparatively cheaper to launch a line of beauty products direct-to-consumers,



Clockwise: Toronto's Nudestix is capturing a global niche market of vegan and gluten-free beauty buyers; Maybelline entered into a collab with influencer and model Gigi Hadid; YSL is bringing more modern design to its products.



Weintraub says. That's because margins tend to be higher on beauty products; cutting out or cutting down on retail partners saves money that would otherwise be used to secure shelf space; and social channels and sophisticated e-commerce sites are now easier to set up. But beauty has a much lower barrier of entry for shoppers, compared to other categories. Unlike fashion or food, make-up and skincare is a bit easier to take a chance on. Lower price points, an abundance of reviews and the repetitive nature of a purchase makes it more palatable for consumers to try their hand at buying digitally, he says.

And, of course, while it is relatively easy and risk-free to buy make-up online, as consumers continue to normalize digital shopping, similar trends are playing out in categories that have historically been harder to crack through e-commerce: see the successes of Casper (mattresses), Clearly (glasses), or even the boom in luxury ware, as prime examples. Generous return policies, flat shipping fees, and again, a wealth of reviews makes it easier to spend money without having to try it first.

Generally speaking, modern upstart brands have done an excellent job at reaching their consumers in ways they want to be reached.

First, beauty buyers are voracious consumers of content and information, says Lucie Greene, director of JWT Intelligence. Thank the how-to YouTube videos or the product-of-the-day Instagram stars who make finding and creating a "look" more accessible. The need for content has even spawned events like Beautycon – a two-day U.S. conference where thousands of consumers can hob knob with the influencer elite (including the stylists of the stars and... Hillary Clinton?).

"Beauty has become the new music festival," Greene says.

Millennials and Gen Z, in particular, grew up in a digital information age – where

reviews and blogs galore shape how they choose things from restaurants to destinations to schools and even toothpaste. These shoppers seek out information on the products they want, Greene says. They like to know what goes into making a tube of lipstick or who recommends a shade of eyeshadow, because it's in their nature to want to know more. Knowledge is power, and digital-first brands – which own their own media channels – have done a great job of fulfilling that demand.

Coupled with this idea of "the more content, the better," these digital-first brands are inherently social. Often built without the backing of big CPG marketing budgets, they had to grow out their digital cred on platforms like Instagram and YouTube. And since they mostly came of age at the same time as the influencer movement, it was a mutually beneficial arrangement for many smaller brands to partner up with emerging internet stars.

But make-up is inherently social beyond, well, social media, says NPD's Chung. Just look at the rising popularity of face masks – and, in particular, masking parties, in which girls and guys get together to cleanse and moisturize. People (most often girls and women, but certainly boys and men as well), have long shared the experience of cosmetics and skincare. And with the hyper-digitization of life, there's been a renewed desire to spend time together IRL.

The social nature of these brands is not only informing the people they partner with and the audiences they reach, but also the way products are designed, says Greene.

Instagram, in particular, has given way to stunningly designed packaging – which consumers are sometimes compelled to take photos of and share with their networks. Glossier’s minimalist look is a prime example, she says (see also the contemporary designs of Deciem or the sleek lines of Toronto’s Stellar).

“A lot of packaging in beauty used to be very interchangeable,” Greene says. “But if you look at Fenty, Pat Macgraw, Glossier – the packaging is as much the story as the product themselves. It’s the thing people are sharing and Instagramming. It’s part of the novelty.”

What’s more, consumers are increasingly treating beauty as a “wellness” category. She points to Glossier’s sunscreen line, which is built on the tag of “age better” as a proof point: Glossier isn’t about stopping or slowing aging, rather the product is meant to encourage “being the best you possible.”

Similarly, Toronto-based Nudestix – a vegan and gluten-free line of all-in-one makeup sticks – has seen huge growth across the globe, says Karoline Kanani, EVP omnichannel sales and marketing at the makeup co. The brand, launched four years ago, is available in 36 countries, due to it catering to a growing demand for all natural, vegan products, something mass brands (who operate at huge scale) often cannot offer.

And of course, there’s the increasing shift towards personalization, says Greene.

The trend is visible in the popularity of lines like Rhianna’s Fenty, which offers 40 shades (compared to the typical 10 to 12 from mass

brands) of foundations so that all people – regardless of skin colour – can find the perfect fit for them. (While Fenty launched in 2017 as a digital-first brand, it is backed by Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessey and produces cosmetics through Kendo, the company’s incubator that helps manufacture “white label” products.)

True product personalization, of course, is difficult to do at scale and is often relegated to individual stores or as promotional, limited-time offers. But since these upstart brands often operate at a much smaller scale to begin with, many are able to provide more bespoke offerings, says Greene. Brands like Toronto-based Bite lipstick offer Lip Labs in cities like Toronto, New York and LA, where die-hard fans can have their own shade of lipstick created just for them; while companies like skincare manufacturer Shae Moisture offer similar bespoke product lines.

“It’s not totally bespoke,” says Greene. “There are only so many combos you can make. But there’s theatre around it being made ‘just for you.’” She predicts that as genetic mapping and biometrics companies become prevalent, we’ll see even more customized products in the coming years.

Ultimately, these brands have done a great job at becoming destinations unto



Above: Traditional beauty brands, like YSL, are looking to go direct-to-consumers.

themselves, she adds, even as many get distribution through the likes of Sephora. They’ve made mass beauty feel personal and are “chipping away at the traditional notion of a beauty brand,” Greene says.

Deloitte’s Weintraub pegs much of their success around these companies owning the end-to-end shopping experience. “They are able to assess and develop insights [from shopper data online] to make the customer experience better,” he says. “They’re able to respond to trends faster and can tailor a deeper one-to-one experience.

“That’s why you see traditional

beauty brands making acquisitions, they know there’s a disadvantage to not going direct,” he adds. “There’s an element of chasing, and catching up. For years, traditional beauty brands didn’t have to build a digital business and figure out how to leverage data and analytics to succeed. They were on cruise control.”

But some traditional beauty brands have made headway as they take direct-to-consumer notes from these smaller, digital-first beauty brands.

Unilever-owned St. Yves, for example, has offered a pop-up bespoke product “Mixing Bar” in New York over the past two summers, while mass beauty brands like Cover Girl and Dior have upped their colour offering to 40 in response to Fenty.

A greater design emphasis has also been placed on product packaging: Maybelline, for example, rolled out a minimalist blush pink beauty line with Gigi Hadid, and YSL revamped some of its products to double down on design.

And, of course, some big companies are further along their journey than others. CPGs like L’Oreal, which has offered e-commerce since 2011, have seen huge growth in the DTC channels in recent years, as people become more comfortable with buying online, says Stephanie Binette, CMO at L’Oreal.

In 2017, e-commerce saw a 33% year-over-year growth, with the channel making up 8% of the global company’s total sales. “As I keep explaining to our team, e-commerce is not the cherry on the cake. It [is] the new cake,” L’Oreal CEO Jean-Paul Agon told investors on a conference call in 2016, emphasizing plans to invest



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Clockwise: The three founders of minimalist cosmetics brand Nudestix; Shiseido adopted marketing tactics frequently used by digi brands, launching its cosmetics line in a series of pop-ups.



aggressively in the channel over the next few years. Today, 18 of the company's brands are available direct-to-consumers.

This summer, L'Oreal began trying its hand at offering personalized recommendations for skincare via conversational AI-powered chatbots, says

why not offer them videos on contouring? If people consistently bail on product purchases for chemical exfoliants, perhaps the website or email marketing could offer a step-by-step guide on choosing which product is right for them?

Binette stresses this is very early days, of course – that type of initiative requires a ton of content to succeed – but she's hopeful for its potential.

"It's one thing to be able to do it, but we actually have to be in a position to produce the content necessary for it," she says. "But it's definitely a high priority. Our belief is that the more relevant we can be to consumers, the better our chances to build long relationships with them." 

Binette. Available for Vichy and La Roche-Posay, the chatbots take consumers down a pre-designed list of questions about their skincare needs, ultimately driving to product recommendations. There have been more than 20,000 conversations with consumers since the launch in August, and L'Oreal is considering using the tool for other brands as well.

The company is also experimenting with product recommendations based on consumer insights and data it's gathered over the last seven years. Still in beta testing, L'Oreal is building out new consumer purchase models, with the idea of recommending items buyers may want to consider based on what they've already purchased, positively reviewed, and how it compares to other people's purchase histories. The hope is to roll that out across all brands in the next year or two, Binette says.

Also in the works is content personalization – though that's at an even earlier stage of development, Binette says. She adds the idea is that, based on a person's browsing habits on e-commerce sites (do they read reviews or watch how-tos?) and their shopping cart history (what was purchased, abandoned, etc.), the entire website could change to offer shoppers content specific to their needs. For example, if someone only ever buys skincare products from L'Oreal,

THE DISCOUNT GROCER WITH SWAGGER

AS IT CELEBRATES 40 YEARS, NO FRILLS IS DOUBLING DOWN ON UNAPOLOGETIC MARKETING TO BRING MORE SAVVY SHOPPERS INTO FOLD. BY MELISSA DUNNE



Some things never truly go out of style. Back in July 1978 when Loblaw opened its first No Frills store in East York, Ont., unemployment and inflation rates were high. Then, as now, trying to save a few bucks on grocery bills was a popular Canadian pastime.

Forty years ago, the concept of a discount grocery store was something that the late Dave Nichol (then-president of Loblaw, which owns No Frills), said was “an idea from Europe.” There was virtually no real competition in the new space.

That landscape has changed dramatically.

Today, grocery stores battle ferociously, with a bevy of American competition having made its way across the border since the ‘70s, including Walmart, Costco Wholesale and Whole Foods Markets, making it tough for Canadian-bred companies like No Frills to win the Grocery Wars, says Sylvain Charlebois, a professor in food distribution and policy at Dalhousie University.

The chain, known for its bold chrome yellow-and-black colour scheme (and matching No Name household brand), has always stood out. The day before the first store opened, Nichol made front-page news in *The Toronto Star*. The paper that day also teased a story

1977

Then-rival Dominion Stores (later sold and rebranded as Metro) opened its Discount Food Warehouse in Richmond Hill, Ont. An ad in the *Toronto Star* on Nov. 2, 1977, listed 10 reasons its prices were so low and asked customers to bring their own bags.

1978

The first No Frills store opens on July 5, 1978, in East York, Ont. The store had “no butcher, no bakery, no frozen food, no air conditioning, no fancy displays and not even much choice of products,” said a 1978 CBC report.



1993

Dave Nichol, who was the public face and voice of No Frills, exits the company. The brash pitchman perfected the art of content marketing via flyers before it was a thing.



about prices for 35 food items rising by 12.5%. Loblaw was on to something, as there were lines out the door for the first few weeks it was open, according to news reports.

No Frills' debut spooked rivals, and many responded by taking out full-page ads – including Safeway, whose July 5, 1978 ad in the *Star* promoted: “Quality Brand Name Products At ‘No Frill’ Prices.”

These days the Grocery Wars go well beyond taking out some attack print ads. Whole Foods (which was bought by retail giant Amazon in 2017) has aggressively fought its “Whole Paycheque” image by slashing the

Above, left to right: An ad from the 2017 “Get the Frill Out of your Bill” mocks stores that have silly frills like jazz trios. John St. created a popular bag for the 2018 “#Hauler” campaign; The “#Hauler” video showed a woman hanging upside from a minivan window.

prices of popular items, including apples. It also began offering Amazon Prime customers a discount on Whole Foods items as a way to entice cost-conscious customers.

While many other discount rivals floundered over the last four decades (think Steinberg’s and its Miracle Food Mart), No Frills survived. It now has more than 250 stores across the Great White North. While Loblaw doesn’t break down sales by brand, the company reported food retail same-store sales grew 1.9% in the first quarter of 2018, noting it was facing “external headwinds” and a changing retail landscape due to an increase in online grocery shopping.

2001
No Frills celebrated its 100th store opening with the first of many Dollar Days promotions. The popular promo still runs today and features a range of items selling for one dollar.

2009
TV ads by Bensimon Byrne promoted the No Name brand (often prominently featured at No Frills stores) months after the 2008 Great Recession got Canadians’ tightening their belts.

2010
No Frills launches “Won’t Be Beat.” Still in effect today, the program allows shoppers who find a cheaper price within a store’s geographical trade area, to show the ad or receipt and No Frills will match it.

2014
Loblaw’s loyalty program, PC Plus, is introduced at No Frills’ stores a year after it launched. Four years later, Loblaw’s combines it with Shoppers Drug Mart’s Optimum to create PC Optimum.

2017
No Frills approaches John St. after years of doing virtually no advertising other than price-focused flyers, leading to the brand’s largest mass campaign ever – “Get the Frill Out of your Bill.”

2018
John St. follows up with the “#Hauler” campaign, which features a music video and various other components meant to mimic an album drop, such as a branded clothing line.

No Name brings in the green

Loblaw's first-ever store brand, featuring its black Helvetica font on chrome yellow, also celebrates its 40th this year, having launched in 1978 across 135 Ontario stores.

Dave Nichol, then-president of Loblaw's, sang the praises of the generic line, which would later be displayed in No Frills stores that also bore the same colour scheme.

The late designer Don Watt, who worked with Loblaw on many projects over the years, was key to the stark design, says Keith

Rushton, a design professor at Watt's alma mater, OCAD University. The minimalist design of the No Name packaging has long been admired in the design community, with Rushton saying the designs were "brilliant" then and now.

No Name caught on fast, with a 1978 CBC report indicating that nearly 50% of shoppers' opted for the cheaper line at No Frills' store. Then-rival Dominion Stores was first to announce a line of 30 brandless products, but Loblaw was first to have 16 No Name products hit shelves, according to *The Globe & Mail*.

Today, most grocery stores offer generic brands, but back then the concept "baffled" shoppers. However, with prices up to 40% lower for generic brands, shoppers told reporters back in 1978 they didn't mind buying generic "as long as the quality was good."

Customers clearly are no longer baffled by generic brands and most grocers now offer popular generic brands. No Frills' competitor, Costco, for example has seen big success with its in-store brand Kirkland Signature, which made up 25% of Costco's sales in 2014, according to market research firm Market Realist.

House brands historically were not "nationally advertised," a cost consideration that Loblaw first nimbly overcame with Nichol's promotional efforts, but which was later disrupted by a No Name TV push.

It's "a real battleground" these days and trying to compete based on price alone is a losing battle, says Angus Tucker, partner, and co-CD at John St.

Instead, the agency has focused on differentiating No Frills by going straight for the jugular when it mocked Whole Foods-style stores in its "Get the Frill Out of your Bill" campaign in 2017.

A series of tongue-in-cheek spots poked fun at stores with silly frills like "artisanal condiment boutiques" and jazz trios. The campaign resulted in a 12% sales growth versus the year prior.

While Whole Foods may not seem like a direct competitor at first glance, Cher Campbell, CD at John St., says the 2017 platform was intended to celebrate those too smart to pay for frills, as well as getting Canadians who shop at premium grocery chains to rethink their pricey habit.

That campaign set the mood for this year's "#Hauler" work, which has created a buzz around the company as

it hits middle age.

Retail analyst Ed Strapagiel says the campaigns help the brand re-introduce itself to current customers (Baby Boomers and Gen X), as well as become better acquainted with new customers (millennials and Gen Z). Before 2017, the discount chain had spent very little on frills like advertising beyond flyers promoting low prices, notes Campbell.

While she says all of the work John St. has done for No Frills targets anyone who wants to save on their bill, regardless of age, the "#Hauler" video clearly resonated with the under-30 set when it dropped online.

The 90-second video is essentially a high-energy celebration of the Loblaw-owned discount grocery chain, and has garnered 1.4 million views on YouTube.

As part of a larger "#Hauler" campaign that rolled out this summer, the Toronto agency opted to hype the grocery store in the style of an album drop, with everything from the aforementioned video to wild OOH postings to a limited-edition clothing line. The response has been "pure love," says Campbell.

Even though the brand turned 40 this year, an initial campaign was needed to get No Frills back in "consumer's minds and hearts," she adds.

"We couldn't have done '#Haulers' [before 'Frills']. I think [we] would have had [a lot of] 'What the f--k is that?'" says Campbell. "You have to sort of set the table before you can serve the meal."

Mary MacIsaac, VP of marketing, discount division for Loblaw, is pleased with what John St. has served up, saying she sees the work as "giving our customers permission to celebrate getting the most out of their grocery budget and wave their frugal flag proudly."

Campbell and her team have a third No Frills campaign planned for next year, proving that certain things, such as brash discount grocers, never truly go out of style. But sometimes bold campaigns are needed to remind consumers that not spending on frills isn't cheap, it's savvy.

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WHAT'S NEXT IN

Oath goes beyond the buzz to break down the tech trends that really matter

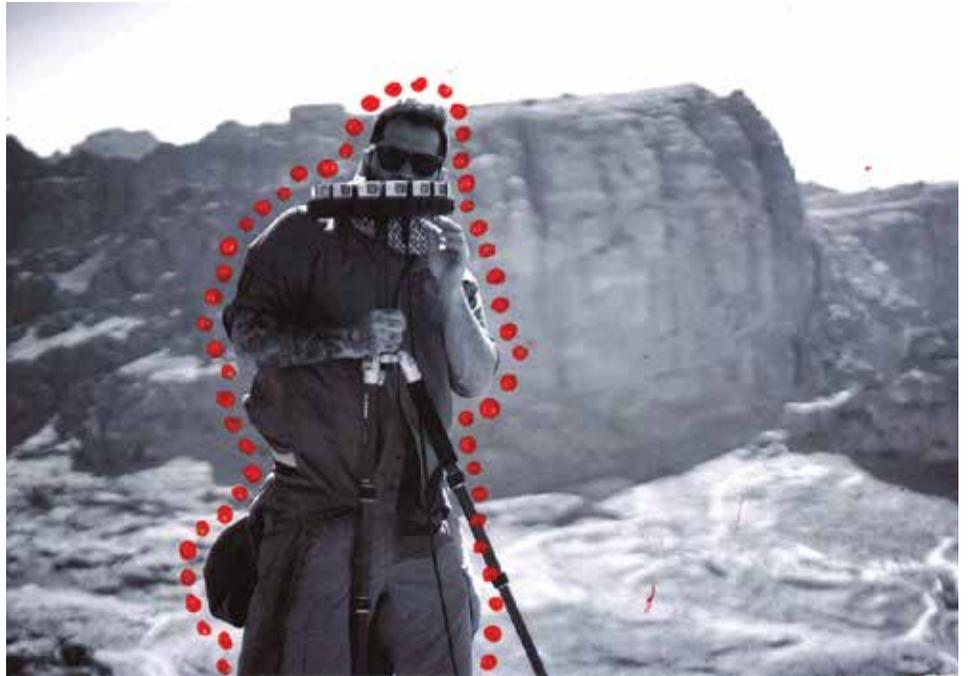
As we wind down 2018 and look to the year ahead, many marketers are asking themselves: Am I ready?

The world of marcom can be a confusing mess of rapid change. Consumers are demanding transparency and brand purpose. Millennials and Gen Z are "killing" the processed foods, car and travel industries. The "sharing" economy is forcing once staid categories to wake up and smell the Uber. And the technology! Everyone's calling out the possibilities of Voice. Virtual reality is the content platform to watch. And AI is poised to make advertising more efficient and effective...eventually.

But what about marketers' ad tech strategies – the quiet technology working in the background to deliver ads across desktop and mobile? Are you ready for the changes coming there?

Jon Finnie, head of revenue at Oath, says what's on tap for 2019 in the AdTech world is less a seismic change than a slow burn evolution in the category, but that marketers need to begin preparing now.

Finnie breaks down five ad tech trends to watch for the coming year – with nary a mention of AI in sight.



Oath's RYOT studio is working on different formats - like 360 cameras - to bring a new angle to contextually relevant content distributed via programmatic platforms.

#1 Contextualized, relevant content - in the context of programmatic

While contextualized ads and branded content are not new trends, per se, we're seeing a shift in how we think of the two categories, Finnie says.

For the past five to 10 years, brands have been investing heavily in creating high-quality content that's typically lived on their owned channels (and, occasionally imbedded directly on media partners' sites). And, after half a decade building the content, there's a lot of it. "And brands are looking for efficient ways to distribute it," Finnie says.

Also at play is the ease at which consumers can (and have) ignored display and banner ads. "There's too much content," Finnie says. "There needs to be a value exchange to get consumers to pay attention."

The result, he says, will be an increase in putting out content – rather than just display ads – over programmatic platforms.

"The best way to engage the user is to make it personal to them. And publishers are

getting better at analysing what their readers want," he says. "So, brands are expecting the content to be more contextualized to the sites [on which they advertise]."

Moving away from a focus on mass awareness, marketers can now seek individual users with a more personalized ad experience across the internet and technology has made it possible to seed out the content to the right user on publisher platforms. Beauty companies can pulse out how-to videos on contouring or skincare regimes on appropriate lifestyle sites, or cooking companies can create meal-planning posts for recipe pages.

Finnie points to a recent campaign for OLG, in which a 360 campaign was shot from a horse jockey's perspective. The ads were specifically sent to people who've shown an interest in horse racing and might be inclined to watch a video about their favourite sport.

All in all, Finnie says, this will make for a better overall experience as publishers are getting ad content readers actually want to pay attention to, users get some new information or value for their time, and brands, well they get people to tune in to the content they're investing in.

AD TECH

#2 Compliance comes to Canada

Europe's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) caused a sweep of change across the continent, though smaller Canadian companies who don't sell abroad would be forgiven if they weren't paying super close attention to compliance wheelings and dealings across the pond.

But it's time to tune into the issue of data protection, says Finnie. Not only is it a growing concern for consumers who've had two years of headlines about personal data security in their social feeds; it's now a question of if GDPR regulations are coming to Canada, not if.

"Whether you're a multinational corporation or a home-grown Canadian company, it's important that anyone who hasn't, start thinking about GDPR regulations and have a roadmap to compliancy for when more stringent regulations come to our market," he says. It's not an overnight shift in how companies think about their data collection, and companies don't want to be caught unaware.

That also includes identifying or encouraging partners to look at their own compliance, says Finnie, as the European regulations don't just extend to a company, but all its vendors as well.

#3 Brand safety and transparency reign supreme

Much has been written about the concerns of brand safety in advertising in the past couple of years, and while many vendors have paid lip service to the desires for brands to operate in a brand-safe (where publishers are known, frequented sites and not just click-bait,) and transparent environment (where banners are seen by actual eyeballs and ads aren't accidental clicks), Finnie sees real momentum happening in 2019.

This year, ads.txt was released, which calls for programmatic buyers to provide complete transparency for their inventory sources. Scrutiny on ad placements has meant there's also been an increased focus from clients over whether the distribution platforms offer premium inventory without a lot of ad clutter and good viewability. "There are a lot more questions coming from brands about how their dollars are working for them," Finnie says.

#4 Streamlined ad tech providers

Coupled with the need for greater trust and transparency in vendor partners, Finnie says 2019 will see the boom in ad tech company consolidation.

While ad tech and programmatic companies are all the rage, the result has been a boom in providers, leading to a very fragmented and crowded eco-system, says Finnie. A 2017 report from the International Data Corporation found that the top 15 ad tech vendors represent less than 40% of the overall share, with most controlling less than 5% of the market. "A multitude of small, specialized vendors with limited revenue [make] up the rest," the report found.

"We're hearing from clients that they want more simplification of the process," he says. "Clients want everything – they want campaigns that hit the KPIs required by the business, that live in brand-safe environments, that use third-party verification partners and are targeting the right people. But they want to work with fewer partners who can give them more of what they're after."

The result is that companies, like Oath, have begun to introduce new offerings to the mix (Oath recently merged its ONE by AOL, Gemini and Brightroll platforms into one simple ad tech stack branded Oath Ad Platforms) or purchasing new companies (Oath launched 14 months ago as a result of the acquisition of Yahoo by AOL, via Verizon), offering clients a more streamlined and simple solution to fulfill their needs.

#5 The fifth generation

The introduction of 5G, currently being tested in the U.S., isn't really a 2019 trend – though it's something brands in Canada should be keeping an eye on in the year ahead.

Rather, 5G – or fifth generation mobile – will offer faster speeds than its predecessors 4G (also known as LTE) and 3G. It's expected to roll out across the United States throughout 2019, with Canada to follow shortly after.

Companies like RYOT, an immersive media arm of Verizon, are already looking at how the faster speeds can be used by brands – what kind of new formats or content it'll facilitate – and Finnie hopes in particular that it'll finally allow AR to proliferate. "Users will be able to consume that content at a speed they expect and they won't be restricted by download and bandwidth limitations," he says. "It's going to be a game changer for users – and brands."



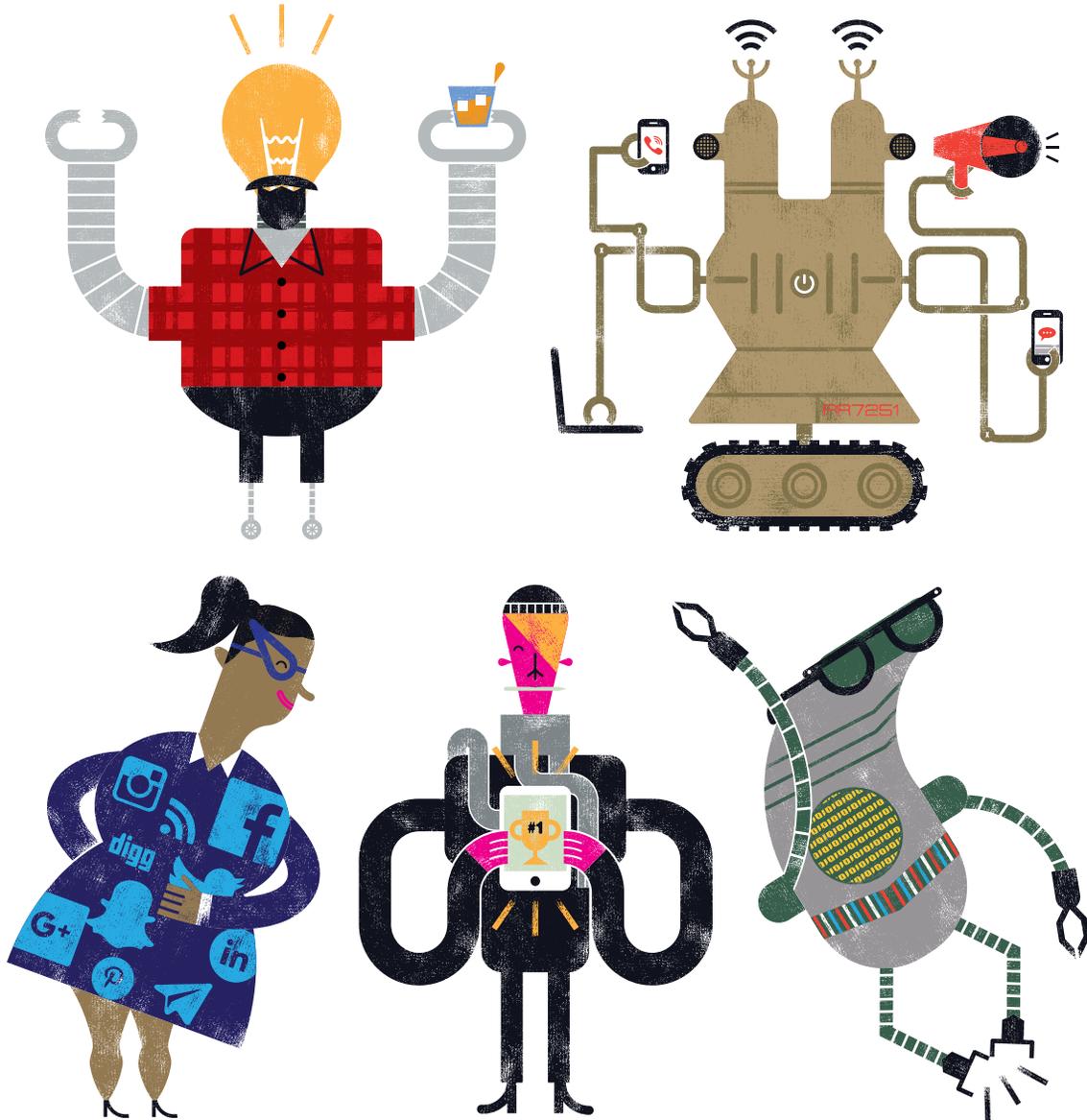
OLG put audiences directly into the jockey's seat, giving horse-racing lovers the opportunity to see what the race was like first hand. The ad was sent out programmatically to a broader audience but then optimized for consumers who've shown an affinity for the sport.

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AGENCY OF THE YEAR | 2018

2018 HAS PROVEN TO BE THE YEAR that agencies of all stripes mastered tech and creativity to compete in today's climate.

This year, Cossette, which has been upping its digital bench strength, won *strategy's* Gold Agency trophy for the third time.

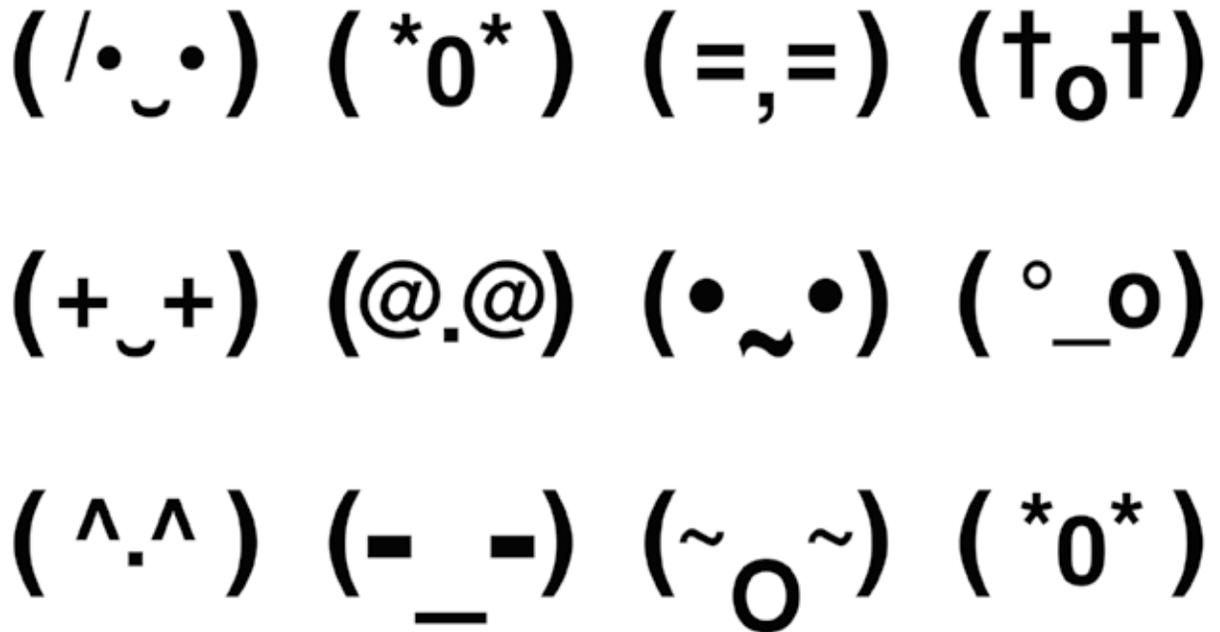
FCB Canada won the top prize in Digital, once again diving headfirst into new technologies, such as virtual assistants.

Rethink tied for Gold Digital and has been tapping into the cultural zeitgeist, while top Design winner Zulu Alpha Kilo has been tapping into its design roots.

New(ish) to the PR block, The Colony Project brought home a Gold for work that got the country buzzing.

And finally, Touché won Gold for Media during a year of embracing change and driving creativity with data.

The shops were judged on their work (see the criteria on p. 66) by jury members from brands and agencies (see p. 64-65), but these articles on the 18 winners go beyond the campaigns entered in Agency of the Year, focusing on the strategy behind their structures, with a look at the work that won.



Cossette VS. everyone

BY JUSTIN DALLAIRE

Above: Cossette staff depicted as text characters.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, TOURISME MONTREAL completed an impressive three-year overhaul of its digital ecosystem. Its new website and app leverages machine learning to offer personalized and contextual information to users based on their profile, interests and itineraries.

The tourism group's first foray into AI was led by its "technology partner." And that partner is Cossette.

The platform's launch demonstrates just how far the agency – this year's Gold AOY and Silver Design AOY winner – has come in evolving its offering for clients in need of a strategic business partner, as opposed to a traditional marketing agency.

Instead of delivering a Montreal tourism campaign, Cossette established "an entirely new business model for the brand," says Daniel Shearer, EVP and GM in Toronto, adding that it's just one example of how the shop wants to "get further upstream and work alongside clients, to anticipate their needs before they brief us on them."

In recent years, the rise of consultancies and in-house marketing teams has forced many agencies to expand their capabilities to meet increasingly complex client needs. But Shearer believes Cossette was particularly well-placed to make that transition, having invested in building a highly integrated agency.

He describes the agency's M.O. as "integration 2.0": moving beyond the "orchestration of paid, owned and earned channels" into the realm of "total brand or total consumer experience."

While Cossette builds comprehensive comms, strategy and brand experiences, Cossette Media provides channel support and its in-house production facility handles content creation.

In other cases where Cossette cannot afford to go it alone, the agency has formed partnerships to accelerate the development of its capabilities. One case is AI.

Having invested in data, tech and CRM for some time,

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KEY HIRES

Denika Angelone, Jerry Jarosinski and Kathy Festeryga as strategy directors; Lindsay Waugh, director of strategy, McDonald's; Laura Kim, VP strategy, McDonald's

STAFF
554

the agency could have eventually built those capabilities in-house. However, partnering with Montreal-based software company Stragidi AI has enabled it to move more quickly. Since initially working with the tech company on the Tourisme Montreal platform, Cossette has entered into a joint venture to collaborate on other AI-powered projects for their respective clients.

Melanie Dunn, Cossette's CEO, says one of the "proof points" of her agency's commitment to being a strategic partner lies in its new compensation structure. Cossette now asks many of its clients to have its fees be contingent on performance.

"Because we're involved from A to Z in the client experience, we want to put some of our own compensation at stake," says Dunn, adding that it's all about framing the client-agency relationship as a true business partnership.

At times, the agency has been able to leverage the relationship it has with clients to compare notes.

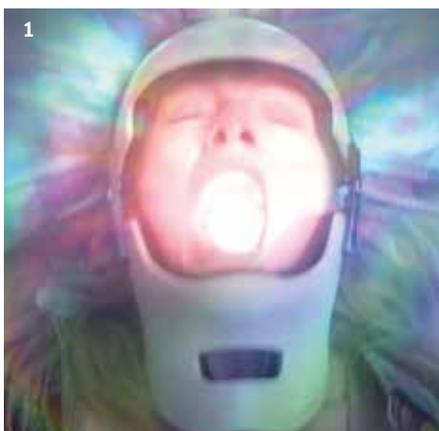
Through its joint venture with Stradigi, Cossette has been exploring the potential of AI with client TD bank, which acquired Toronto artificial intelligence startup Layer 6 AI last January. By collaborating, both client and agency can learn how the other is integrating their new AI capabilities and how to better leverage them.

Shearer says Cossette's multi-disciplinary teams are also continuously evolving with input from clients, who serve as "co-architects" of their agency teams.

The group dedicated to the McDonald's account, for instance, looks different now than it did two years ago.

Over the last year Cossette has made a series of hires to support the QSR from Toronto, including Simon Clancy as a group creative director; Lindsay Waugh as director of strategy; Laura Kim as VP strategy; and Frank

CASES



1. Waking up to a new kind of bank
Fintech disruptor brand Koho worked with Cossette to create a provocative campaign that demonstrates how traditional financial institutions build dreams, only to take them away. Through a 13-minute film, called "Dream Thieves," the brand introduced itself to Canadians who were completely unaware of its existence. In it, Koho was portrayed as a digital bank that can save the day by helping Canadians achieve their dreams by taking less of their hard-earned money for transaction fees.



2. Think you only have time to make eggs on the weekend? Canadians are rethinking that idea thanks to Cossette's 30-second "Weekday Eggs" TV spot for the Egg Farmers of Canada.



3. The agency showed people the way to the Golden Arches via clever highway signage that deconstructed the famous yellow 'M' logo.



4. Cossette built on the success of its previous work for SickKids, this time with "VS - All In," which encouraged Canadians to band together to help the org raise funds for a new hospital.



5. People don't like being told what to do. Given this insight, Via Rail asked drivers "Why don't you take the train?" in a campaign that targeted car drivers with ads that made them question whether driving is the best choice.

► For full cases, go to aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



DESIGN AOY CASES

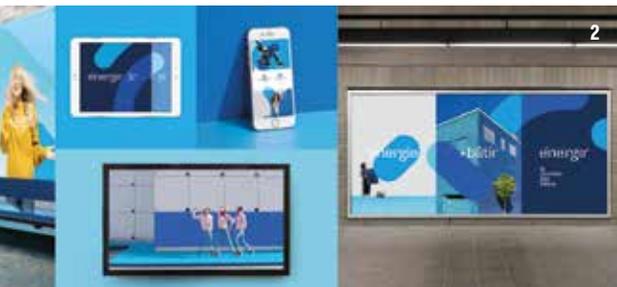
1. The art of rebranding ➤

Rebranding is no easy feat, but Cossette rose to the occasion with its “M Telus” campaign. After partnering with Montreal’s Metropolis owner and operator L’Équipe Spectra, Telus wanted to breathe new life into the performing arts centre. The campaign, which featured OOH postings, put the “M” in “Memorable” with a new logo representing Montreal, Metropolis and, yes, M Telus.



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

3. Cossette helped Handicap International, revamp its image with a new name – Humanity & Inclusion – and logo for a modern world.



➤ For full cases, go to designaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018

Besson as VP client lead.

They work out of a dedicated “McDonald’s corner” of the office – a physical reminder of the collaboration that takes place within its quarters.

The additional strategists are indicative of where the McDonald’s brand is headed, and the role Cossette sees itself playing in that journey.

“You need that voice... to connect the dots, to see the efficiencies, to bring the integrated potential to life in the most powerful way possible,” says Shearer.

The Toronto Cossette team, whose office is under heavy renovations as it expands into space currently occupied by its sister agencies, is also growing, having increased its headcount by 27% over the last year.

By all accounts, Cossette’s approach is paying dividends. In addition to taking the top prize at several awards ceremonies for its “Follow the Arches” campaign, it also bagged a Grand Prix at Cannes this year, becoming the first Canadian agency to do so in more than a decade. The campaign helped drivers locate the QSR through deconstructed images of its iconic golden arches.

Much of the Canadian work for McDonald’s now ships

globally. For example, the QSR’s “BMxB” campaign, which spoofs the fashion and entertainment industries in highly stylized ads, has been taken up in three or four other markets.

Shearer says the momentum of having been named *strategy’s* Gold Agency of the Year in 2016 and 2017 – making this its third consecutive win – has also helped Cossette attract global clients and talent. It already operates in 12 international markets, thanks to a robust tourism portfolio that includes Destination Canada, and it has won new business with UNICEF, Flight Centre and Accor Hotels.

Meanwhile, the number of international creatives calling to inquire about work at Cossette, according to Shearer, has “skyrocketed.”

But there are big opportunities right here at home, too, says Shearer, arising from new industries and innovations that the agency believes it can take elsewhere – for example, new client Canopy Growth (the “Nike” of cannabis). “That’s going to be one that we’re going to go on a global journey with.”



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Touché builds on tech and talent

BY PATTI SUMMERFIELD

“CHANGE IS THE ULTIMATE FORCE IN MARKETING, so we innovate and embrace it. You can’t beat it, so you might as well join it.”

Words spoken like a true optimist, Touché president Karine Courtemanche says her agency has gone through a complete revision of its values, with the idea of “embracing change” at the core of the shop.

“We want our employees to feel comfortable in constantly being challenged and with new ways of doing things, new structures and new technology.”

Touché has made it a priority to create roles that better support its teams’ ability to embrace all the new possibilities, as well as provide tools that maximize efficiency. The agency’s HR department has grown from one to six in the last few years, with a mandate to work with management to ensure employees adapt to this new culture of change – as well as find new talent with the right attitude and tech skills. New hires must understand the inner workings of various platforms and audience-

based planning systems. Having a programming background is a plus.

These efforts are very much aligned with the agency’s tagline: “Fueled by data. Driven by creativity.”

“Part of today’s market shift is what creativity means in the world of data,” says Courtemanche. “Does one come at the expense of the other? We don’t believe that’s the case. We believe that the customer journey is the key to innovation and to creativity. Understand who you’re talking to and it becomes easier for us to find creative, efficient ways to talk them.”

Touché is also technology-agnostic. It does not have proprietary tools and instead it masters and customizes existing tech and consults with clients on best-use scenarios. Part of that is reducing the time spent on administrative work behind offline and traditional buys, such as automatic updates to billing and invoicing every time a campaign is optimized.

“We have invested a lot in the back-end of our

NEW KEY BUSINESS
Bombardier Recreational Products, Huawei, 3M, Ssense, McMaster University, United Way and Weston Bakeries

KEY HIRES
Ilya Daftari, performance account director; Kalliopi Efstathiou, programmatic practice lead; Aleiza Alerta, director, digital investment; Associate VPs: Stephane Hue, Marc-Antoine Grenier and Dany Pedneault in Montreal and Marc-André Menard in Toronto

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operation,” says Courtemanche. “As a result, we’re spending less time on things that bring little value to our clients and more time thinking about strategy. Automation is key when it comes to that.”

Because clients expect more platform expertise, Touché has reorganized its search, social and programmatic talent as a performance group. Its mandate is to better understand digital technology and its complex algorithms.

Courtemanche says she’s seen a shift in clients looking for agencies to link “media actions to sales,” versus simply increase awareness. “With most cases, we show a direct correlation between the work we do and the increase in sales. That’s a real shift in the marketplace.”

The “Data vs. Car” campaign for Via Rail (see sidebar) best illustrates that correlation and creative use of data. The agency’s challenge was to increase train ridership and market share at the expense of car travel. Working with OOH and mobile providers, the agency captured 1.5 million unique mobile IDs of travellers exposed to the ads during their highway commute – and then later retargeted with messages following their journey. Train ridership rose by 11.7% year-over-year and revenues increased by 13.9% as a result. Contextualized messages generated click-through rates 95% higher than all of the agency’s display and mobile campaigns.

Nothing succeeds like success, and that has proven true for Touché. Over the last 12 months, revenues increased by 30%, which was fueled mainly by the international win of Bombardier Recreational Products (BRP), as well as other national media planning and buying clients including Huawei, 3M, Ssense, McMaster University, United Way and Weston Bakeries. In addition, the agency’s head count has increased 20%, with almost 160 employees in the Montreal office and 80 in Toronto.

The latest RECMA report showed that Touché saw 29% growth, versus 4% for the industry. That growth is quantified by the amount of spending handled by the agency, staff and service increases, as well as new client wins. RECMA also ranked the agency number one for a second year in a row in the Vitality score.

“We’re really invested in measurement and that’s a key point for our clients wanting to know the links between media and sales,” she says. “Data visualization and modeling help us better know the business results and outcomes of campaigns.”

“We want to keep on adjusting to new challenges,” sums up Courtemanche, “but never keep our eyes off what matters most – great work for our clients.”

CASES



1.

Quebec's largest sports retailer, Sports Experts, called on agency Touché to create the inspiring “Everyday Coach” campaign, which set out to celebrate everyday people and the steps they take toward a healthy lifestyle. Likening Sports Experts to a supportive coach, Touché created a media plan that spanned activities and lifestyles, and rewarded every single physical effort, big or small. For instance, the brand congratulated those who chose to bike instead of taking a cab. It also supported consumers with ads at the gym or in parks. And it even created a hockey rink, basketball court and soccer field in transit locations to motivate athletes wherever they are.

2. “A Room With Many Views” for Alliance de l’Industrie Touristique du Québec used data to retarget audience segments, such as foodies, to encourage travel to the province.



3. Via Rail’s “Data vs. Car” campaign showed drivers exactly how much time they could save if they jumped on board.

▲ Media Campaign of The Year



► For full cases, go to mediaaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



Rethink and the cultural zeitgeist

BY MELISSA DUNNE

TOM SHEPANSKY TALKS LIKE A HIPPIE and acts like a businessman.

While these two sides may seem at odds, the co-founder of Rethink has managed to bring them into harmony for his agency, staff and clients.

“We’re independent and values-based,” says Shepansky. “And I’ll be very competitive here and say, unlike the multinationals, we are here for our people, for our products and our profits, not the other way around.”

For Shepansky, who co-founded Rethink in 1999, along with Chris Staples and Ian Grais, making money and having business ethics were seen as two sides of the same coin. When the trio started their agency on the West Coast, they wrote their four core “beliefs” on a whiteboard: “Believe in the brands we help build. Believe in the people behind the business. Believe they need and want a great creative idea. Believe they can pay our rates.”

Those are still the beliefs that drive the agency, which has been profitable every year, notes Shepansky.

The agency’s focus on people has worked. Rethink’s credo is that free-market capitalism and ethical consciousness can co-exist to better both the business and the world. And it’s this ethos that has paid dividends for many of its clients, including the Canadian arms of A&W and IKEA, which have had big wins with values-based campaigns. Rethink has also been winning a lot of new business pitches lately, including WestJet.

The values of Shepansky and his agency are currently in perfect alignment with the zeitgeist. A survey of more than 20,000 consumers, released by Kantar Consulting earlier this year, found that companies “with a high sense of purpose have seen their brand valuation increase by 175% over the past 12 years versus a median growth rate of 86% and a growth rate of 70% for brands with a low sense of purpose.”

And a majority (almost two-thirds) of millennials and Gen Zers express a preference for “brands that have a point of view and stand for something,” adds the survey

KEY NEW BUSINESS

Heinz Mayo, Kraft Peanut Butter, Ontario Science Centre, KRAVE, WestJet, Ace Bakeries, UNIQLO, Mad Jack, Ottawa Tourism, Skip the Dishes, Pedalheads, Marcon, BeFresh, Uniqlo, CBC, Goldseal, Nicola Wealth, National Film Board of Canada, Maille, Sonnet

KEY HIRES

Christina Yu, managing partner, CD; Shelby Spigelman, director of broadcast; Dhaval Bhatt, CD; Stephen Parker, editor; Alex Butt, content producer; Thomas McKeen, motion graphics artist

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by the global growth consultancy.

Younger people want to buy products from brands that align with their beliefs. Shepansky says Rethink has reviewed mountains of research that shows the demo believes in putting their money where their values are. For example, A&W's recent successful launch of the Beyond Meat burger (which is regularly sold out at stores) proved millennials have an appetite for plant-based burgers, which align with those that believe consuming animal-based burgers is wrong.

Before the U.S. plant-based burger brand hit A&W stores, Rethink rethought how it did product launches. The agency engaged influencers who tried the burger (which reportedly tastes uncannily like the real thing, despite being made with peas and mung beans) to promote the new menu offering on social media. A TV spot didn't run until the third week of the campaign.

The shift away from television spots to influencers posting about products online means telling a compelling brand story is necessary, says Rethink's co-founder.

"It's really important for brands to have that authentic, believable story. In A&W's case, its evidence behind their food and its whole ingredient story has been a powerful piece of the strategy," says Shepansky.

"I'm a big believer in values-based brands and building strong values that you can use in your communication. I think more and more millennials are looking for brands they can believe in."

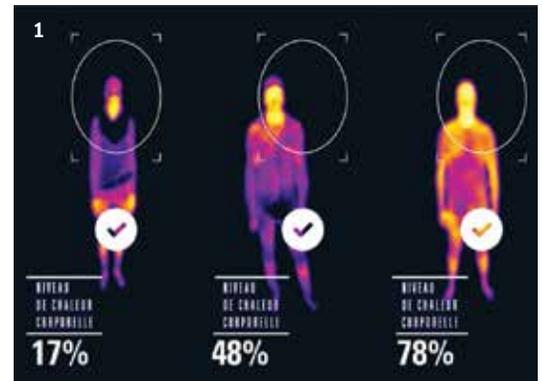
After celebrating 19 years in business this November, Rethink is now looking ahead to 2019 and beyond. The three founders are building an independent agency with strong values and are "guiding, mentoring, governing and leading" the next generation of Rethink leaders. Among them are Aaron Starkman and newly appointed CD Christina Yu, who was recently hired from Red Urban to co-lead the creative discipline at Rethink Toronto. Its culture is what drew Yu to the indie shop.

"Since the day I started in the business, I had always wanted to work at Rethink," she told strategy. "They've always been fiercely independent and prioritized people, product and profit in that order."

Staying true to those roots and values is as important to the Rethink co-founders now as it was back in 1999.

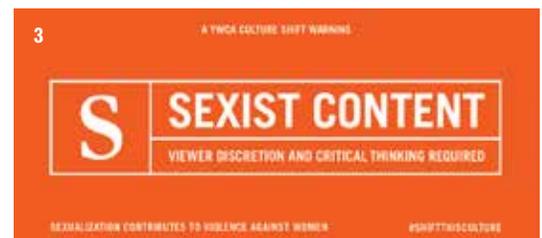
"We don't have a quarterly analyst to talk to [that we have to tell how] good our business is. We just run our business," says Shepansky on the pluses of being privately-held. "We're growing and we're profitable, but we're focused on our people doing the best work of their career for clients they believe in, and for a business that can make money and that's values-based."

CASES



1. Warming up for discounts

For its 50th birthday, Sports Experts wanted to inspire Quebecers to adopt a healthier lifestyle. A smart thermal imaging station was created to measure body temperature and reward commuters with discounts when they worked up a sweat. All they had to do was run or walk up a flight of stairs in a Montreal subway. While it may seem simple enough, the stairs in question were the steepest in the station, giving people a serious challenge if they wanted to earn a coupon. For instance, to get a 70% discount at Sports Experts, you'd have to increase your temperature by, you guessed it, 70%.



2. Using a digitally-led design system, Rethink worked with local folk with deep roots in their communities to tell their personal stories for Uniqlo.

3. For YWCA, the agency disguised warning labels on YouTube to

highlight how sexualization is still rampant in music videos. Mimicking labels that play before trailers, the "Six-Second Ambush Advisories" were unskippable and advised viewers of the content they were about to watch.

► For full cases, go to daoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



FCB as early tech adopter

BY MELISSA DUNNE

ALEXA, WILL YOU BE THE NEXT BIG THING?

Even if she can't answer that question, FCB Canada is certainly going to try. The agency is betting voice assistants, like Amazon Echo's Alexa, will be around for years to come, assisting people, as well as companies looking to hawk their brands and wares.

"We have an interesting and budding voice practice we're getting into in terms of Google Home and Alexa," says Tyler Turnbull, CEO of FCB Canada. "We really think that voice user experience for brands is very important because, as adoption in Canada increases, it dramatically changes the buying process for a lot of classic brands."

FCB put their laser focus on digital transformation a few years back and this year the shop claimed Gold AOY in the Digital category. Now they're tackling the audio aspect of digital branding.

As of the end of Q1 2018, 8% of Canadians had some form of smart speaker technology in their home,

according to a survey by Media Technology Monitor this spring. For comparison, the report pointed out that adoption of tablets was only at 3% in its first year, while Netflix's adoption was 6%.

FCB Canada's VP managing director and digital head, Ricky Jacobs, told *strategy* that the agency has already created voice experiences for major brands in the CPG and home improvement categories, with more work being launched over the next few months.

In September, the agency was finishing construction of a new floor of its Liberty Village office that's set to house studios for its Fuelcontent division, which is focused, in part, on content for voice-activated devices. The bespoke production studio was designed to create high volumes of digital content and has recently done work for big-name clients, including BMO, Air Canada and BMW. In 2018, the production shop experienced 45% growth and is poised to see similar numbers in 2019, says Turnbull.

NEW KEY BUSINESS
BMW Canada, Air Canada, Retail Platform, Lotto 6/49 LottoMax, Fountain Tire, Paccar, Stericycle, Ministry of Education, Made In Space, BMO Acquisition

NEW HIRES
Sylvain Dufresne VP, head of creative, FCB Montreal; Jenna Yim, VP, solutions strategy & customer experience, FCB Canada; Rob Sturch CD, FCB/SIX; Cindy Navarro and Henry Park, ACDs, FCB Canada; Erin Howes VP, group account director, FCB Canada; Stephanie Vallee, business lead, FCB Montreal

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Working on cutting-edge technology and content is nothing new for FCB. Every year the agency sends a team down to Silicon Valley, Calif., to the FCB Hackathon where staff work on client briefs alongside tech companies, such as Google and Snapchat.

Keeping its people trained in the latest technology is a top priority for the agency, even at a global level. During a training session in September, FCB's global innovation catalyst, Kris Hoet, led multi-functional teams to find ways – using voice technology – to solve a real-life challenge based on a client brief, says Jacobs. After giving a presentation on voice user interface, Hoet led a brainstorming session and ideas were sent along to sister agency, Happiness Saigon, which then developed a prototype for the brand, overnight. That prototype was designed to help people make simple home renovations, with the help of a Google Home device.

Marrying technology with creative is what led FCB Canada, which has offices in Toronto and Montreal, to recently win numerous awards both at home and abroad. For example, FCB/Six's "Destination Pride" campaign for PFLAG Canada won 13 Cannes Lions awards this summer. The campaign used Pride's

colourful, iconic stripes to flag the safety of LGBTQ+ travel destinations. The campaign launched in 92 countries and 46 languages, with the organization creating 109 unique Facebook ad campaigns targeting people who are interested in LGBTQ+ topics and travel.

Boldly using technology to create compelling creative is clearly paying off for FCB Canada. The plan when it comes to voice, and any other new tech that emerges, is to work out technical and creative kinks early.

"Often, as new technologies [arrive], early work on those new platforms [are] technically correct, but not strong creatively and has a tenuous connection to the brand. Remember Facebook Contests? Or early online video? It can take some time before agencies figure out how to use a new technology well," says Jacobs.

FCB Canada is aiming to stay ahead of the pack by getting staff up to speed on "the potential of voice, not only as a functional tool, but also as a way for brands to offer meaningful utility and to fulfill their brand promise," he adds.

Whether Alexa is the next big thing or not, FCB Canada is prepared for the future – whatever it holds.

CASES



1. Driving up road safety

Canadian Tire auto service retailer, Fountain Tire, found that checking tires was low on the priority list for many Canadians. So, it called on FCB to get more drivers to put tire checking to the top of the list via its "Safest Highway" campaign. Unbeknownst to most drivers, tire tread reading technology was installed at a gas station near one of Alberta's most dangerous highways, providing a safety report that proved just how many cars were operating with unsafe tires (over 30%). Then, Fountain Tire offered to change those unsafe tires right then and there. The campaign raised awareness of an important road safety issue, as well helping sales increase by 4% nationally.

2. Using social analytics and geographical data, FCB reimaged the Pride flag as a dynamic bar graph for PFLAG.

3. BMW's "Script your Search" Vagon campaign involved the creation of 1,500 pre-roll ads that matched people's search terms.



▲ Digital Campaign of The Year



► For full cases, go to daoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



Zulu Alpha Kilo's big design ideas

BY JOSH KOLM



NEW KEY BUSINESS
Tim Hortons,
Consonant
Skincare, Reunion
Foods, Nikon,
HomeEquity Bank,
Betadine

KEY HIRES
CDs: Gail Pak,
Rodger Eyre,
Gerald Kugler,
Irfan Khan and
Susie Lee; ACDs:
Michael Siegers,
Jacob Gawrysiak,
Dan Cummings;
ADs: Kevin Sato,
Adam Tuck,
Sarah Quinto;
Group strategy
directors: Tim
Hopkins, Heather
Segal; Strategist:
Spencer
MacEachern

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A LOT OF AGENCIES WILL SAY THAT a certain expertise is baked into its DNA. When it comes to Zulu Alpha Kilo and design, the agency's history backs that up.

When Zulu opened in 2008 with Bell as its first client, it was asked to create a new brand platform and visual identity for the nation-wide telco. Zak Mroueh, the agency's founder and CCO, says he brought three designers on at the time, knowing how important it would be to find a visual vocabulary that could be maintained for years to come. That foundation helped prime the agency for its Gold Design AOY win a decade later, the same year it is being recognized with a Bronze in the overall Agency of the Year competition.

"Since the beginning, design was an integral part of the agency," says Mroueh. "When you look at Zulu's body of work over the last decade, be it for Bell or Workopolis or Interac, design is a big part. Clients have tended to come to us looking for a rebrand or a new idea or new platform. Design always plays a big role in that."

It is a part of what Zulu does, but the industry around it seems to be set on infusing design with data and innovation. Some agencies, in Canada and globally, have launched new divisions or built teams tasked with using one to optimize the other.

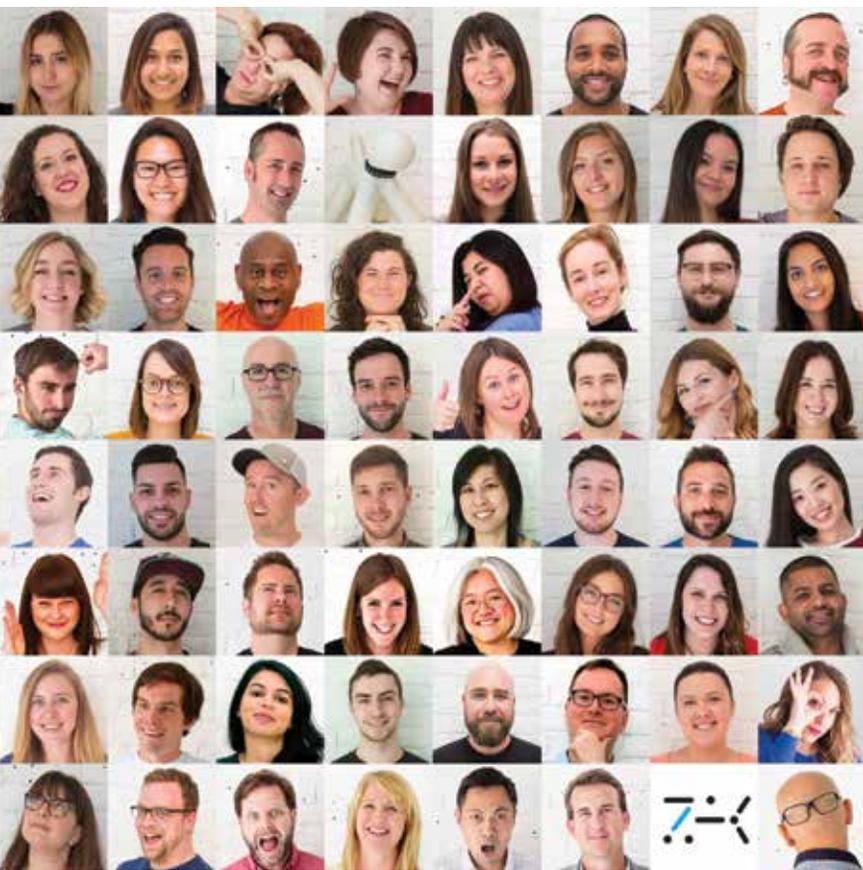
Zulu has been treating design a bit differently by approaching it the same way it did in 2008. While the discipline is led by Ryan Booth, who was named design director in 2016, it is fully integrated with the rest of the creative department, along with digital, technology and traditional advertising staff. That's not to say data and innovation aren't important to the agency's work – before our call, Mroueh was in an edit suite with brand innovation director Sean Bell, who was bringing data

best practices to an upcoming campaign – but it needs to work together with other skills and disciplines at play.

"We believe everyone belongs to the creative department," he says. "We didn't set out to be an ad agency or digital agency or design shop. There have been times when people have considered us more as one than the other. But they all need to be part of an integrated arsenal. We also have a lot of hybrid creatives that can work in two or all three of those worlds, especially when we talk about the younger talent we've brought on."

That creative department has seen a lot of movement over the last year. A year ago, ECD Allen Oke left the agency for a leadership role at Huge's Toronto office. That gap has since been filled by adding more CDs to a roster that now reports to Mroueh, flattening the creative leadership: Rodger Eyre and Gerald Kugler joined from Juniper Park\TBWA last fall, longtime ACD Gail Pak was promoted shortly after, and Irfan Khan and Susie Lee were brought on over the summer. That's on top the nearly dozen other creatives that have been hired over the last 12 months.

There has, of course, been plenty of new business to



justify growing to more than 100 staff.

What started as a project-based assignment for Tim Hortons last year has also expanded to an AOR mandate, with Zulu running campaigns to reinforce the QSR's roots in Canadian communities, as well as its coffee sourcing and brewing processes. And when it comes to younger brands, the agency has been enlisted by Reunion Foods to bring its vegan products to mass audiences and help Consonant Skincare promote a new store location with an OOH campaign (see sidebar).

"Things can look beautiful for the sake of looking beautiful, but clients come to us because we've become known for conceptual design with a strong idea behind the work," Mroueh says. He's referring to the Consonant work, but also to long-term brand campaigns for Interac.

He's also referring to projects like redesigning Harley-Davidson's Canadian offices, or creating a café around the iconic motorcycle maker's impact on culture. The café was led by Booth, and is what Mroueh says is the result of bringing disciplines together. "He is a working designer, but he is also what we talk about when we say someone is a 'hybrid thinker,' someone who is so good at

DESIGN AYOY CASES



1. Using city blight to highlight skincare

For Consonant Skincare, Zulu helped the brand celebrate the diverse skin tones of a Toronto neighbourhood, crafting a colour palette to reflect the differences. The "Re-Skinning Queen Street West" campaign made use of the aging city through posters that likened cracked concrete, scaly trees and uneven cobblestones to common skin ailments that could be addressed with Consonant's product line. Ambient executions were applied to walls, sidewalks and lamp posts that featured exposed areas. Smooth.



2. How do you contain the open road to one space? Ask Zulu, who transported Harley-Davidson's long Canadian history from highway to head office.

3. Zulu cut the crap for its RGD "Speak The Truth" campaign, shouting concealed truths about the design industry with promotional merch paired with a deadpan video and campaign website that's so honest it hurts.



► For full cases, go to designayowinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



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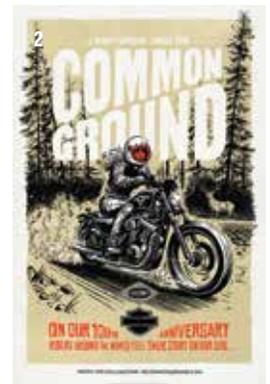
Promotional Products | Uniform Programs
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Kitting & Fulfillment | Commercial Print

AOY CASES



1. Mental health is health

About half of Canadians experience some form of mental illness by age 40, so Zulu Alpha Kilo's "Mental Health is Health" multi-platform campaign was speaking to many Canadians. The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) effort stood up to stigma, pointing out that just as with a broken leg, mental health challenges require care and compassion.



5

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2. *Common Ground* celebrated the 100th anniversary of Harley-Davidson with a branded doc that found its way onto the Discovery Channel.
3. Uber teamed up with Zulu and MADD to create "Uber Moms," highlighting the impact of driving impaired.

4



4. The agency created a heartwarming documentary-style campaign for Whirlpool titled "Sama's Lunchbox."
5. Tim Hortons and Zulu created "Coffee Equity," with one spot celebrating the QSR's very fresh coffee.

merging the different worlds."

"Designers bring a freshness to the thinking and a purity to the creative process," adds Mroueh. "They're not thinking about awards, they just want to solve a design problem and really come with a fresh take on the way things should be. And when we put them together with a traditional advertising team, that's when the magic happens and you get those really strong ideas."



The Colony Project grows

BY MELISSA DUNNE

AMANDA SHUCHAT DOES NOT BACK DOWN from a challenge.

When the managing director of The Colony Project was going through applications for the pilot year of an initiative to help startups raise their public profiles, she assumed both male- and female-owned/operated companies would apply. She was wrong.

“For me, we’re doing this and there’s no female-led startups? That makes no sense,” says the head of the Gold-winning PR Agency of the Year.

Since its inception in 2016, The Colony Project, an offshoot of sister PR agency Citizen Relations, has shared office space with other Vision7 shops in a converted warehouse in Liberty Village. “A colony is a group of Citizens coming together to form a common good,” explains Lianne Pitts, a senior account manager at the small, full-service PR agency. The small, but agile, shop was built on that insight, and its focus is to be able to move quickly as business conditions shift.

The young agency has quickly added clients and has gone from three to 22 staff in two years. In a bid to reach even more new clients, The Colony Project, whose main

office is located in one of Toronto’s startup hubs, created The Common Good Project to help fellow entrepreneurs raise their profiles through expert advice from Shuchat and her team. In return, the agency got to make connections in Canada’s startup community.

But the project unintentionally excluded women in its first year. Turns out, the PR shop needed a PR strategy to attract female-led companies. So Shuchat decided to put her skills to good use. She teamed up with Toronto’s SheEO, which helps women entrepreneurs (and is also a Colony Project client), to get the word out about the project that only accepted applications from female-led startups this year.

Shuchat was initially surprised that no female entrepreneurs applied in 2017, but perhaps she shouldn’t have been. “It led into a larger conversation about women’s behaviour in business versus men, what we’re comfortable doing and things like that,” recalls Shuchat.

While just over half the Canadian population are women, a mere 5% of tech companies have a solo female founder, according to a 2017 report by #MoveTheDial,

KEY NEW BUSINESS

Kraft Heinz, Louis Vuitton, Guinness World Records, Pizza Pizza, Canada Bread, Connected, Medcan, SheEO, Ontario Heritage Trust - Doors Open Ontario, Spotlight on Israeli Culture

KEY HIRES

Emily Barnes, senior manager, digital; Rebecca Webster, director; Candace Beres and Christina Sfeir, senior account managers

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a Toronto-based organization that aims to increase the number of women working in tech.

The push to reach out to an underserved community of female leaders worked, with Shuchat and her team receiving five times the number of applications during the program's second year. The agency got so many high-quality applicants that it increased the number of participants from five to six startups this year, says Shuchat. Jacqueline Leung, founder and editor-in-chief of Pressed News, was one of those applicants picked to participate in a workshop this fall. She heard about the project via her managing editor who, in turn, heard about it through a friend who saw a LinkedIn post about it. Ahead of the workshop, the founder of the small digital media startup said she was excited to sharpen her PR skills, as well as get the opportunity to network with fellow female entrepreneurs.

While the first year of the project only attracted male applicants, there were still many benefits. It resulted in some participants working with The Colony Project on other projects, which in turn led to new leads and business, says Shuchat. For example, after the 2017 series, the PR shop worked with Weel (a Common Good participant) on a winter driving program to drive awareness of the company, which matches up car owners with "certified and vetted" service providers.

The Common Good Project also built a ton of goodwill in the tight-knit startup community, helping the PR shop start relationships with the likes of SheEO, Social Lite Vodka, Green Propeller, The Concierge Club and Pur.

The Colony Project does not want to pigeonhole itself as an agency only for startups, though. The managing director notes that its clients range from Hyundai to restaurant chain Nando's to The Match International Women's Fund. In just two years, the agency has opened offices in both Toronto and Montreal, and has grown from a staff of three (with an equal number of clients) to 20-plus staff (working across 20 brands).

While being a female leader of a startup herself is something that sparks conversation, Shuchat hopes for the day when it's not a topic of conversation anymore.

"There are a lot of women in PR, so it's not a crazy shift in that regard, however it's refreshing to see women at the top [at The Colony Project]... that's something I hear from my team a lot, or when I'm recruiting," says Shuchat, quickly adding: "I like talking about it. I think it's an interesting discussion, but we should hopefully not have to discuss it soon, right? It should almost become irrelevant." Until then, Shuchat and her team will be busy helping women (and men) promote their businesses.

CASES



1. Sweet on the Sourtoe Cocktail

Getting Canadians to talk about, let alone travel, to the Yukon is a tall order. When the famous toe from the Sourtoe Cocktail was stolen from The Downtown Hotel in Dawson City, Yukon, it got people buzzing about the frigid region. To capitalize on the hype, The Colony Project cooked up a PR campaign for Tourism Yukon. The contest encouraged people to share a photo of their toe for a chance to win a trip for two to the province. Alas, the mummified human toe was returned to its rightful home just as a "#MakeAToenation" pitch was about to be sent out to national media. The PR shop quickly pivoted, refocusing the messaging around finding a back-up toe, just in case the original toe ever went missing again.



2. For the Hyundai Ioniq Canada launch, the agency held a Tinder campaign with two influencers in a bid to reach young millennials.

3. The shop created the "#RestingStitchFace" campaign to help the Match International Women's Fund raise awareness, with one of the posts dropping even dropping a B-bomb.

► For full cases, go to pr.aoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018

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John St. bundles up

BY MEGAN HAYNES

THE INDUSTRY IS IN FLUX. Thanks to the Amazonification of shopping, brands are rethinking their marketing strategies. What's more, as media companies like Facebook and Google and consultancies like Deloitte and Accenture poach work from traditional ad agencies, shops are required to evolve – and fast.

“In the last 10 years, agencies have lost billions of dollars in global revenue to consultancies and media and social platforms of all sorts,” wrote John St.’s CCO Angus Tucker in a post on why agencies need to put more commercial client work (versus non-profits) forward at award shows. “They gave those billions to Deloitte and Accenture and Google because they thought these companies could better help them grow their businesses, and solve their very real problems.”

While he was talking about using award shows to show the bottom line impact, the reality is that many creative shops are scrambling to compete. Part of that evolution has been the addition of more business solutions, like deep-dive business strategy, path-to-

purchase mapping, tech solutions, and more. These are services John St. has been adding to the mix for the past decade, says Arthur Fleishmann, president of the Toronto-based shop.

But, with so many skills at the table, John St. had to refocus its attention with a new(ish) approach to working with clients, Fleishmann says. “Clients weren’t coming to us for specific services – like digital or social. They wanted a more macro view.”

The shop, which has a second office in Montreal, offers brands the choice of tapping into five bundles – or “storefronts,” as Fleishmann calls it. The decision to classify the agency work into distinct buckets began as the shop took on more retail work, from clients like Loblaws, No Frills, Home Hardware, Sleep Country and Winners, but also from more atypical “retail” clients like Mitsubishi and Boston Pizza.

“There are so many touchpoints for [retail] brands, from menus to signage to packaging to social and digital – they need someone to bring order,” says Tucker.

KEY NEW BUSINESS
Shoppers Home Healthcare, Sleep Country, Shire Pharma, Grow Force, Real Canadian Superstore, PC Express, PC Insider's Subscription, Boston Pizza Quebec

KEY HIRES
Trevor Thomas, director of strategic planning; Chasson Gracie, director of insights & analytics; Les Tapolczai, director of channel planning; Jared Tredway, team leader; Rachel Cogan, social strategist; Karim Khatchoyan, account director, Montreal; Dorota Pankowska & Lia MacLeod, ADs; Liz Allemang, retail writer; Benjamin Lory & Natalie Papanikolov, senior designers

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John St's primary "bundle" is the traditional creative execution element, Fleishmann says. "We're an ad agency first and foremost, and virtually all of our clients come to us because they want an integrated campaign."

But for brands looking for more, the shop has broadened its scope to include consultancy-style services.

Typically, new clients will go through the first storefront, Fleishmann says, which is all about defining the brand's purpose and identity. While this includes design elements, it also includes strategy and planning, with a team identifying challenges facing a brand, and then creating a long-term business plan. He points to work with Sleep Country (which recently shifted away from selling mattresses towards a broader focus of selling sleep) as a primary example.

The new brand identity for the retailer stems from the insight that sleep is becoming an important component to the growing focus on "wellness," and Sleep

Country, which offers a variety of sleep aids, is uniquely positioned to capitalize on that niche. This year, the brand rolled out commercials and even delivery truck signage that points to this new focus on a good night's rest.

Second, the agency focuses on creative execution, such as traditional advertising elements like TV campaigns.

Optimization comes next, with the team focused on identifying (and solving) consumer pain points. "Some clients don't feel the need to do this because they spend enough internally on mapping the shopper journey," Fleishmann says. However, shopper mapping, A/B testing and other optimization efforts are increasingly becoming important tools. He points to work done with Mitsubishi, which benefits from broad brand awareness but low conversion rates. John St. created the "Configurator" app on the brand's website for people to customize their cars and book a test drive online.

Fourth, John St. delves into the data and insights that

CASES



1. 100 years of Kaizen: The philosophy of Kaizen (which literally means "improving" in Japanese) extols the virtues of continual improvement. So, in celebration of Mitsubishi's 100th birthday, John St. chose to celebrate this approach. The agency found four Japanese centenarians who spoke about their own life-long improvements, and wove the story of the Japanese car company into a doc-style film. The "A Century in the Making" campaign drove home the ethos of Kaizen that's baked deep into Mitsubishi's DNA.



▲ Agency Campaign of the Year



2. A print ad from PC encouraged Canadians to "Eat Together," even if the food (in this case, a hot dog) didn't come from the retailer.

3. To catch consumers' attention in the ultra-competitive pizza space John St. cooked up a fictional Ristorante Cioccolato for real pizza purveyor, Dr. Oetker.

4. Not many discount grocery chains have limited-edition clothing lines, the agency changed that with its "#Hauler" campaign for No Frills.

5. We all have days when we just want to put on some sweats and eat pizza in bed. John St. gets that. So the agency created a pizza box that could become a pizza tray for Boston Pizza's customers.



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DESIGN AOY CASES

1. Retooling HH's brand ➤

How do you remodel a dusty Canadian icon? With killer design. John St. worked with Home Hardware to create a simple, consistent visual language that helped modernize its brand. A fresh typeface and tagline infuses the brand's human focus into the DIY world.



2. John St. took a black-and-white approach to the Alcon Canada rebrand. The designs used crisp, sharp lines and high contrast to accentuate the idea of perfect vision and focus.

3. For Gabriel Nivera, the shop created a visual brand ID based on how people view the photographer's images.



➤ For full cases, go to designaoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018

power campaigns, as well as ROI measurement. This is a little more ad-hoc, and clients often opt in and out based on their internal resource needs.

The fifth, and smallest “storefront,” is the agency’s creative technology team, dedicated to creating digital solutions for brand problems.

The overall bundle approach hasn’t fundamentally changed the agency, Fleishmann adds, saying most staffers remain on their previous teams. Rather, it’s helped the shop formalize how it communicates its offering to clients and what skills to focus on.

Going forward, Fleishmann suspects the agency will continue to bolster its PR and social offering. John St. is also staffing up with more programmers, as well as adding a customer experience person to better map the shopper journey. He also wants to explore embedding a team from sister agency Group M at his shop’s office to ID media efficiencies for clients.

As agencies evolve, John St. is still offering solutions to brand problems, says Tucker. “As much as the world has changed, we’re still all planners at heart. We have to find a way to make a brand mean something to people.”

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NEW KEY BUSINESS

Mountain Equipment Co-Op, Canadian Red Cross, Roots Canada, Tourism Ireland, Hockey Canada, Mackenzie Investments, Eli Lilly – Taltz, Canadian Ski Council, Chartered Accountants of BC

NEW HIRES

Christine Wilson, managing director; John Killam, chief client officer

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OMD amps up solution arsenal BY MELISSA DUNNE

MAKE “BETTER DECISIONS FASTER.”

That’s the new holy grail for OMD Worldwide courtesy of its relatively new CEO, Florian Adamski.

Since taking the helm, Adamski has been promoting the mantra as the agency undergoes big changes in an ever-evolving media landscape. OMD Canada’s CEO Cathy Collier has been leading the “massive transformation” that supports that goal here in Canada.

Last year, the local arm of the agency pivoted to have close to 90% of its digital work be biddable, says Collier.

The shop also restructured and consolidated jobs and

departments in 2017 and 2018. That restructuring led to some big wins, says Collier. OMD retained long-time client, McDonald’s Canada, after a big global review. OMD West in Vancouver won outdoor adventure retailer Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) as a client in April. Plus, Rogers stuck with OMD after the agency created Red Magnet, a custom shop by Omnicom Media Group.

“The focus this year was bringing life and blood to ‘Better Decisions Faster,’” says Collier. “It’s [focusing] on a new data platform... marketing science and, really, business outcomes first and foremost.”



OMD Canada has been taking a more consultative approach to its work, digging deep into data to ensure the right media buy reaches the right customer at the right time.

For instance, for the first time ever, Collier and her team shifted the media mix to be “digitally-centric” for McDonald’s annual “Coast to Coast Monopoly” promotion (see sidebar). Last year, the agency found that Canadians weren’t participating in the program because they didn’t believe they could win the collect-to-win prizes. “One of the insights we had was [the program] could do better if people actually believed they could win the prize,” explains Collier.

So, while the buy still consisted of TV, radio and OOH to bring mass awareness, OMD went digital-first by using YouTube to drive home the message that it’s not that difficult to win a prize. It used Google’s Vogon tech, which allowed the agency to target audiences with videos of actual winners based on behavioural data.

McDonald’s Canada is a “performance brand” that’s looking to OMD to deliver better KPIs, says Collier, adding that the “switch over to digital performance had a significant impact in terms of participation and sales.”

This focus on business outcomes is crucial for OMD Canada, as consultancies such as KPMG and PWC encroach on media agencies’ territory.

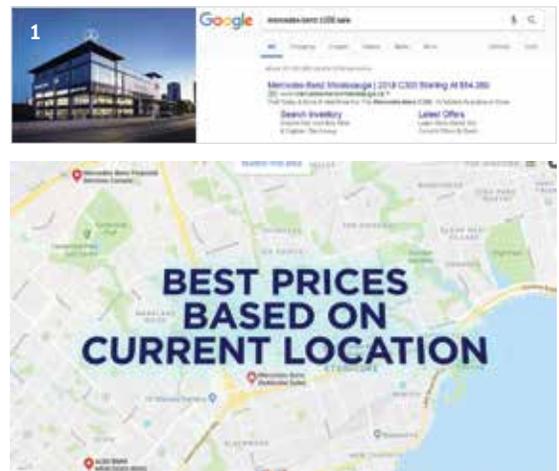
“I don’t think it’s any secret or surprise that we’re competing more and more with consulting companies, it’s all over the news,” says Collier. “One of the things they really bring to the business is a senior consultant approach and in order for us to compete we need the same level of senior talent and leadership.”

OMD is also being challenged by brands opting to bring media in-house. The trend is part of a growing broader marketing approach to bring agency functions internally. A survey by the Association of National Advertisers (ANA) in the U.S. found the majority (78%) of its member marketers have some form of in-house operations.

To counteract those trends and amp up the media shop’s value equation, OMD Canada will hire a chief strategic officer by the end of 2018. The agency has also hired data scientists to work side-by-side with strategists to draw more, and better, insights out of its reams of data.

“It’s our responsibility to reposition how we’re perceived by 2020,” Collier says. “The things that we do have an impact on business [as well as] what people think and what people do.”

CASES



1. Revving up Mercedes-Benz sales

While a car sale might end with a person signing on the dotted line at a dealership, the customer journey often starts online. So for Mercedes-Benz, OMD drove visits to dealers through the clever, tactical use of data. When customers were researching vehicles online many ended up in a fit of frustration when they couldn’t find their desired model at a local dealership. Updating search ads with inventory data from the car lots of different dealerships was the solution. When people searched for a specific model, only ads and listings for dealers in stock would appear. The ads gave buyers all the information they needed even before landing on the site.



2. McDonald’s wanted to help consumers believe that they could win big with “Monopoly Coast-to-Coast,” so the agency used data to highlight the prizes people were itching to win in custom videos.



3. For Pepsi, the agency negotiated a media-first, partnering the cola brand with Snapchat in a program that drove millennials to purchase. “Snap It With Pepsi” Snapcodes were placed on bottles and users could layer Pepsi-branded emojis and stickers on top of real-world scenes.

► For cases, go to maoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



Bleublancrouge's collective mindset

BY JENNIFER HORN

ONE IS COMPANY, SEVEN IS JUST GOOD BUSINESS.

Bleublancrouge (BBR) has become a collector of sorts. Watching from the sidelines as networks cherry-pick and amass independent shops for their global ambitions, Sébastien Fauré has been quietly conducting his own version of an acquisition strategy. It's taken four years, but his 31-year-old shop now operates, to a degree, seven different agencies.

Under a new umbrella brand, called Humanise, which debuted in late October, the traditional ad agency sits alongside what the CEO calls a collective of pure-play shops: intelligence firm and strategic consultancy L'Institut Idée; data optimization group Classroom; digital shop U92; gamification specialists Alice & Smith; content production shop Fieldtrip; and, newest to the mix, experiential marketing company Youville Haussmann Park (YHP).

Not one to keep his own counsel, Fauré opens up

about how and why BBR has somewhat quietly invested in six small advertising-adjacent businesses.

To put it bluntly, he wants to “fight back on globalisation” and “serve and protect” the entrepreneur, the independent mindset, and the courage to be a risk-taker. “[Entrepreneurs] lose their drive, that fighting force. And they become a regional player. The talent's perspective changes, and what happens is the cultural or creative ecosystem of advertising changes,” says Fauré of the impact of indie shops being bought up, noting that his agency has only purchased a minority stake in each of the businesses.

But that's just one pillar of reason. BBR, from its own business perspective, is working to cater to clients that continue to look for speciality shops, in addition to an AOR, says Fauré. The purpose of the collective is to create a modular ecosystem that allows clients to tap into experts within various fields, but in a more

organic way. “[Brands] want to have the best of breed, but without being stuck in a network,” says Fauré, noting that clients can come in from any agency door, with the ability to tack on and cross-bill other speciality offerings for more ambitious projects.

Since making these investments, and housing all seven shops under one roof in Montreal, with smaller office coordinates in Toronto, each of the businesses have grown 15% to 20%, says Fauré. The collective is now 150 people strong, with a total annual revenue of \$40 million. And one of the areas that Fauré is watching closely, believing that it will have massive growth in the near future, is gamification.

“The reason we have gamification in our collective [with Alice & Smith] is because we know that there is a gaming gene in all of us,” he says of an inherent desire humans have to engage in some form of gaming activity. “The problem is that not many agencies have realized how powerful that is.”

It’s clear BBR had the gene on its mind this year, as all three campaigns submitted for Digital AOY (which led to a Silver win) were of a gaming nature – from creating an alternate reality game (ARG), to challenging people to level up on their goals through chatbot technology, to

exploring the inner mapping of an actual video game.

All of which is testament to what Fauré says is the future of marketing: community management.

“Alice & Smith has a precise ability to manage those [gaming] communities,” he explains. “If you know how to maintain and entertain a community worldwide, you should be able to manage those outside of gaming. Because you can understand the code, the vocabulary, and what makes them tick, you can learn to understand others, like the vegan community. The channel, mindset and tools change, but the rules and regulations of managing communities remains the same.”

And beyond gaining access to Alice & Smith’s expertise in mobilizing and motivating communities through gaming tactics, Fauré says all of BBR’s specialty shops bring a driving force that the agency wouldn’t be able to develop internally.

“When you acquire an indie agency, you basically acquire the intangible parts: the drive of the entrepreneur, the risk-taking attitude, the energy that comes from building something new... And [in return] we believe that we [can] help entrepreneurs in Quebec, and elsewhere, grow and reach the international market.”

CASES



1. Your liver is talking to you

Telling young Canadians not to drink too much is something they’ve heard ad nauseum growing up. Bleublancrouge anthropomorphized the liver in a bid to get the sobering facts about alcohol abuse directly to people age 18 to 34. The “My Liver” campaign for Let’s Drink Better included a smartbot that would meet younger people where they spend a lot of their time: Facebook Messenger. The goal was to get the whopping 30% of young Canadians who are considered heavy drinkers to cut back on their alcohol consumption. The conversational smartbot, personified as a cantankerous, moody and sassy liver, was developed with more than 10,000 responses to people’s questions about drinking.



2. The agency captured the virtual world of Ubisoft’s *Assassin’s Creed* as a way to give users a preview of the game before it launched, encouraging viewers to capture scenes for Instagram as though they were a tourist.



3. To honour the complexity of Hello Games’ *No Man’s Sky*, the agency created “Waking Titan.” Cryptic tapes with hidden messages were sent to the Reddit gaming community, and mysterious radio ads advertised a fake company from the *No Man’s Sky* universe.

► For full cases, go to daoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



Lg2 explores data-driven design

BY DEEPA VENKATESAN

2018 HAS BEEN A YEAR OF EXPANSIONS for Lg2, the latest being the opening of a new Toronto-based design and branding division in September. The creation of a dedicated team in Toronto was “inevitable,” says the agency’s Antoine Levasseur-Rivard, adding that it comes at a time when Lg2 is quickly growing beyond Quebec.

Levasseur-Rivard, who at one point worked at Lg2’s Montreal office before joining Sid Lee in 2016, was rehired this year as group director of design. He now works alongside newly hired Ryan Crouchman, CD of design (who previously led Leo Burnett’s own dedicated practice) to help build a design-focused clientele for its Toronto arm, which opened in 2014.

Following the success of the award-winning and visually-driven “Give-A-Care” project for Rethink Breast Cancer in 2016, Levasseur says the phones were ringing off the hook for design work from other brands in the city. Based on those calls, client demand is coming from the B2B space, as well as the finance category, which

are now two areas Lg2 plans to focus its efforts, he says. “We are [also] now more open to architects and service companies, as they are beginning to understand the importance of branding.”

The design team in Toronto is just three months old but has already secured three national and two international clients, says Levasseur-Rivard.

Design projects, across Lg2’s Toronto, Montreal and Quebec City offices, account for 13% of Lg2’s total revenue. The agency’s original design studios, Lg2boutique, has earned a global reputation with award-winning branding work for clients such as Farnham & Lager, The Olympic Park and Natrel. Building a team in Toronto is a step outside of the niche it built in Montreal, but Levasseur-Rivard says the goal is to brand the division as being able to cross markets.

“Our goal is not just to be Toronto or Montreal-focused, but to be recognized as the only bilingual design agency,” says Levasseur-Rivard. “We want people to be



interested in us because we have the advantage of both languages and cultures.”

Lg2 as a whole has attracted several new clients based on its collaborative approach. It spent 2017 and 2018 rebranding itself around the idea that it can go beyond a client’s brief to find new opportunities. This “Lg1+1” approach, combined with its internal innovation process, called Elements, brought forth the idea of working in more collaborative teams.

“It is not about which office should handle what. Every product and project that we work on has a little bit of all the offices,” says Alexis Robin, VP digital experience in Montreal. For instance, when Lg2 was tasked to rebrand Air Canada Vacations, the design, innovation and digital experience teams from both offices worked together to produce an online travel doc that seamlessly integrates into a website.

The challenge with design is proving it can

generate results, which is why Levasseur-Rivard and Crouchman are putting a focus on data-driven design – a new direction for Lg2 given the creation of a 25-person data and insights team, led by VP Anne-Marie Castonguay in Montreal.

“With data, we will be able to offer more personalization to our clients,” says Crouchman, using the loyalty app it created for restaurant brand La Cage as an example of how Lg2 is using data to make product suggestions through user-friendly digital experiences. He adds that design has evolved from separate, isolated projects to building experiences around a single platform.

“We are beginning to focus on what our clients will need in the future and less on what they need now, thus seeing the market before it even arrives,” says Levasseur-Rivard. “The culture has not changed, but what has changed over the last year is our future-forward thinking.”

CASES

KEY NEW BUSINESS

Appy Here, Catelli Foods, Cidery Milton, Domino’s, The Green Beaver Company, Vacances Air Canada, Ville de Montréal, Zoo de Granby

KEY HIRES

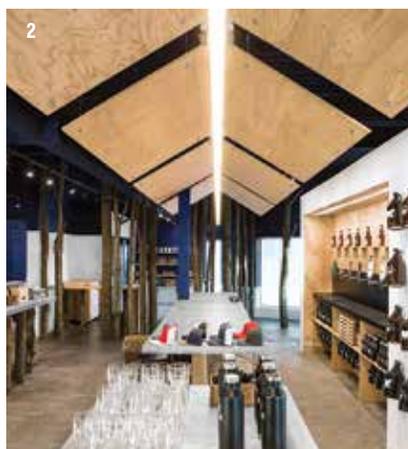
Antoine Levasseur, group director, design; Ryan Crouchman, CD, design; Anne-Marie Castonguay, VP data and insights; Sophie-Annick Vallée, VP strategy; Caitlin Gora, strategy director

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1. Music to our ears

Music often stirs strong emotions: it can make you cry or lift your mood. Lg2 used this insight for its campaign for Orchestre symphonique de Québec. The organization wanted to attract new subscribers without alienating its loyal (older) base. The new logo communicates emotion via a supersized and stylized initial “O,” which is for orchestra but also for the “Oh!” of surprise, awe, and admiration of music. The lettering style of the “O” also evokes the shape of certain orchestral instruments.



2. Lg2 brewed up a new brand image for Boréale, a pioneer of the Quebec microbrewing movement back in the ‘80s. The Relais Boréale boutique upped its craft cred, while a series of artisanal packaging was created for people to discover new beers, while also keeping them under the Boreale umbrella brand.



3. Lg2 has helped promote Parc Olympique as the place to be for both locals and tourists alike. The team built, from scratch and by hand, a dozen handcrafted print illustrations that underline the many uses of the park.

► To read the full cases, go to designwinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



Narrative's visual storytelling

BY JENNIFER HORN

ARCHITECTS NEED NOT APPLY FOR A JOB AT NARRATIVE, but a basic knowledge of 3D renderings is a plus.

None of the PR shop's 39 staffers are architecturally trained (much less have a design background) but for the last two years, Laura Serra, co-CD at the Silver-winning firm, says visually-complex experience design has been the order of the day. The growing demand is warranted for an agency that lists Nike and Converse among its clients. How else would a brand build hype around a new shoe drop, for example, without buzzy events that beckon the public, and media, to share-it-forward?

"So much of what we do now is creating experiences for brands," says Serra. "And, so, we're bringing to life what we have in our heads; this experience to paper."

The Bensimon Byrne-owned agency has come a long way since the annual "Xmas in July" events it once held in the offices of sister agency, OneMethod (OM). A few years back, the team would redecorate a section of the Toronto office into a living catalogue, previewing the wares of brands like Aldo, Call it Spring and Bentley, way in advance of the holidays for media-eyes-only. Fast forward to today, and Narrative is more likely found building blueprints for events like Up Cannabis' branded luxury campsite and music venue (see sidebar).

"Usually, when you launch a product, it's the centre of everything. Everything is built around trying it, eating it, wearing it, drinking it, whatever. Instead, we had to design an experience that had no product," says Serra, referring

to the complexity of working around tight regulations. But Serra's creative partner, Meredith Klapowich, says Narrative has learned to be creative amidst regulatory constraints: "Some of our biggest creative opportunities have been for brands like Up and [pharma brand] Bayer. They're both bound by so many regulations."

That necessity to ignore conventions is what led, in part, to Narrative breeding a group of "creative problem-solvers," says managing director Sarah Spence, who joined the shop two years ago from High Road Communications to help jolt the agency into its next life cycle.

Narrative, says Serra, has essentially gone through three phases: the first was when it was born as a government management consultancy out of Bensimon Byrne, with the name Narrative Advocacy Group in 2007; then as a lifestyle-focused PR firm when picking up Aldo snowballed into a host of other fashion clients; and now as an agency that no longer identifies as a PR shop per se.

"For a lot of folks, PR has been about media relations," says Spence. "For us, it's no different from brand or marketing work... it's actually more about storytelling."

Fortunately, the agency is in a position where the boundaries of the two fields can effortlessly blur. In its two-story offices that once housed CBC studios (fun fact: the former *Mr. Dressup* show set now sits as a stylish meeting room), Narrative can pull in the digital and design minds at OneMethod a floor below, or the more traditional advertising services of parent company Bensimon Byrne across the way. In addition, branded content (which has become a more regular creative output as a result of its work with influencers, says Serra) can be developed in conjunction with Button Factory, the production function that services all three agencies.

"Within these four walls, we are all born out of the entrepreneurial spirit of Jack [Bensimon, founder of BB] and Amin [Todai, founder of OM]. And we all just feel like

NEW KEY BUSINESS
1800 Tequila, Brickworks, Canada Beef, Converse Mill Street Organic, Salesforce, UP Cannabis

KEY HIRES
Richelle Umali, senior account manager; Demetra Kentris, senior project manager; Andrea Lee-Greenberg, account director; Michelle Agnelo, senior account manager; Benjamin Ruby, senior creative

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we can figure things out here," says Serra of the agencies resourcefully banding together on projects. For example, instead of outsourcing the design and construction of product display bags for Converse events, Narrative uses the services of OneMethod, which has its own fashion line.

"There are three doors, but it's one agency. If clients come in the Narrative door, there is comfort that they have access to so much more," says Spence, noting that the shop-in-a-shop model has enabled it to be more nimble, a necessity for experience-hungry clients like Nike, an account it recently picked up.

"Nike has really changed the way that we work, because they are so fast-paced and want everything yesterday," says Serra, noting that "agility has become our secret sauce." As a result, the agency has fundamentally changed the way it works with other clients, moving quickly on projects and tackling the "strategy and creative process almost in tandem," she says.

Now, as the agency begins to widen the scope for new clients like Salesforce, which first came up through the PR stream and has now folded brand work into Narrative's assignment, it must also manage its own internal growth.

Since 2016, the shop's headcount has jumped from 12 to 40, says Spence, prompting major office renovations to accommodate. What's more, because it's creating more branded events, more hands-on logistical management is required, with three events managers coming aboard this year to take over running the sites, says Serra.

It's also undergone a rebrand of its visual identity to demonstrate the agency's approach and focus on the very definition of its name: stories. "We believe there are three sides to every story" now makes up the shop's tagline, accompanied by a triangular logo, with Spence noting that agency teams are structured "to be a little bit of creative, a little bit of strategy, and a whole lot of execution."

CASES

1. High on UP North

UP Cannabis wanted to speak in a language Canadians could really understand in the lead-up to legalization. That's why Narrative tapped into the beauty of Northern Ontario (with help from a partnership with The Tragically Hip) and created an immersive "UP North" experience.



2. The Green Fund wants you to reduce your carbon footprint, so the shop launched the "Rebate Home Show," promoting ways Canadians can save money - and the environment.

3. Narrative's "Break Bread Smash Stigma" campaign for Casey House was an exclusive stigma-ridding event, featuring HIV+ chefs.



▲ PR Campaign of The Year

For full cases, go to prawinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



Sid Lee does things a little different

BY MELISSA DUNNE

NEW KEY BUSINESS
BlackRock, Hydro One, Canadian National, DAZN, Hydropharmacy, Vapium Medical, MAAX Bath, PSP Investments, EXO

KEY HIRES
CDs: Matthew Fraracci, Kim Tarlo; Martin Szomolanyi, digital CD; Elana Schachter, content strategy director; Jean-François Légaré, editorial director; Jean-François Lavigne, CX / UX strategy director

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SID LEE MARCHES TO THE BEAT OF ITS OWN DRUM.

It is the type of agency that calls its employees “artisans” and has a “creative credo.”

Being different than the typical stuffed-shirt shop is baked into Sid Lee’s DNA. Back in 1993, Bertrand Cesvet and Philippe Meunier had “no money, no portfolio and no job prospects” when they started an ad agency in Montreal. Since the start, Sid Lee worked on projects that sometimes sit outside of traditional advertising, from commercial events to interior design. The out-of-the-box approach clearly paid off for this year’s Bronze Digital AOY winner. Sid Lee now has offices in Montreal, Toronto, Los Angeles, New York City and Paris.

Since June 2017, Sid Lee’s Canadian offices have hired 125 “artisans” and seen 10.5% growth thanks, in part, to winning nine new accounts. That new business runs the gamut from a provincial utility provider to the world’s biggest money manager to two burgeoning marijuana companies. But retaining clients has also been key to Sid Lee’s success, notes Vito Piazza, group president, senior partner, at Sid Lee’s Toronto office.

“Growth [also] came from just an increase in the scope of the work we’re doing with current clients, so that is a

big deal for us nationally,” says Piazza.

Sid Lee was able to do more for current clients thanks to evolving its core capabilities. The agency became part of New York-based Kyu in 2015. Toronto’s BIMM is also part of the collective, which helps to bolster Sid Lee’s data expertise.

“We’re trying to be more comprehensive in the experiences we create for our clients,” says Piazza. “For us, the experiences we create live seamlessly across marketing, digital communications and the physical world, and an organization like BIMM can really tap into its expertise and CRM. For clients, a lot of times, it’s about getting more loyalty, more value from their existing customer base. When you look at how marketing is evolving, a lot of it is about really taking care of the customers you have.”

With Sid Lee celebrating 25 years in business this year it’s honouring its past, while evolving to meet current and future client needs.

Near the start of 2018, the agency unveiled a rebrand that saw it refresh its logo by replacing its all-caps white lettering on a black background with lowercase letters that mix serif and sans-serif typefaces.



We've grown, our typeface has shrunk,
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Amazon wants to make sense of your connected devices

A new dedicated service will help customers deal with the volume and unstructured nature of IoT data.



University of Toronto launches fintech hub

The university's business school is looking

DIGITAL CASES

1. Eating up competitors

In the age of fast eats and door-to-door service, Grocery Gateway needed a new way to stand out. Calling on Sid Lee, the agency dug into digital analytics and clever creative. Headlines that catch the eye and food porn-style imagery got viewers clicking the digital and social ads. In addition, vertical video and a cascading animation mirrored users' natural scrolling behaviour and was optimized for Instagram Stories, where they could swipe up.



2. Loto-Québec's "Lucky Stars" campaign aired a meteor shower on Facebook Live, encouraging viewers to make a wish (and buy a ticket) when they saw a shooting star.

3. The "Boobies" program for Rethink Breast Cancer was launched with a video that featured teen influencers, and had artists create their own content for the non-profit's Insta page.

4. "The Bulletproof Flag" is made entirely of Kevlar, the material used in bulletproof vests. On it is spray-painted Black Lives Matter, acknowledging the org for which it was made.



▲ Design Campaign of The Year

► For full cases, go to daoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018

As part of refreshing the agency's image, Meunier, Sid Lee's co-founder and CCO, unveiled an evolution of its creative credo – "Create what matters" – during a masterclass at C2 2018. The annual conference, held in Montreal, was the brainchild of Sid Lee and has been dubbed the "Davos of Creativity." The event has featured everyone from Snoop Dogg to Chelsea Manning to Sophie Grégoire Trudeau.

"'Create what matters' means: what matters for our clients, what matters for our people, what matters for communities," explains Piazza.

That credo lines up with the higher goal for Sid Lee – having cultural impact. "We're looking for cultural impact. I think that the strongest brands give and take from culture and whenever we do our best work it delivers against that," says Piazza.

Indeed, some of Sid Lee's most recent iconic work, such as the internationally-acclaimed Black Lives Matter "Bulletproof Flag" (see sidebar) had a cultural impact.

As the now-global agency looks ahead to the next 25 and beyond, creating culturally relevant work remain at its core. But the artistic-leaning agency is also focusing on blending creativity with technology.

"The first goal is to continue along the path we're already on. I think we're known for our digital legacy, I think we have to keep going with that and pursuing that," says Piazza. "The Digital Era is very much upon us and as an organization, and given our clients' business, you have to continue shifting and evolving with how the marketing landscape is changing."

But no matter what changes come, Sid Lee will, as it always has, march to the beat of its own drum.

**3 nominations.
1 incredible team.**

**3 nominations.
1 équipe incroyable.**



**Congratulations
sidlee
Félicitations**

H&R BLOCK



Cossette Media plays the long game

BY BREE RODY-MANTHA

NEW KEY BUSINESS

Casper, Canopy Growth, Sun Life Financial, Koho, Curling Canada, Bombardier Commercial Aircraft SEO, RTC (Réseau de Transports de la Capitale), Les éleveurs de porcs du Québec

KEY HIRES

Wes Wolch, CSO; Luke Southern, group account director; Janice Liu, VP digital strategy and operations; Charlene St. Amant, VP planning; Brian Cuddy, VP of performance & programmatic

STAFF
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JOSEPH LEON, PRESIDENT OF VISION7 COMMUNICATIONS, says 2018 is not the time for agencies to be complacent. With the rise of programmatic and the need for constant innovation, Leon says it's time to shift from being "an agency to a partner with more strategic value."

Cossette Media's current mission is to exist in a white space between agency, advisor and consultancy.

"We've invested aggressively in the consultancy and advisory side of what we do," Leon says, noting that it's put more power and staff behind its data management, advanced analytics and services teams for the last seven years. And it's starting to pay off, he says.

Business has been on the upswing for several years. According to the latest RECMA report the agency was ranked third in the country based on its vitality and structure. Vision7 overall has been rising on the list since November 2016, and is fast-approaching the much-larger Dentsu Aegis Network in the rankings.

The flurry of activity – including Cossette Media wins for Nando's, Social Lite Vodka and Tourism Yukon, as well as a slew of new business for sister agency Jungle Media and Cossette – has resulted in Vision7 expanding its physical space. Its Toronto office is set to double in square footage in the next year as it renovates a

neighbouring building to accommodate the growing team.

Brooke Leland, SVP and GM of English Canada, says the team is also growing at a faster pace than ever, with nearly 20 new faces at the agency this year alone (an increase of 30% over last year). But also big on Cossette's priority list is promoting internally, she says, adding that there were 16 promotions in 2018. She adds that Cossette has made an effort to promote junior and mid-level employees with more diverse backgrounds to senior positions, subverting the "old media guard" steering decisions in an ever-changing landscape.

She pointed to three newer additions to its executive team: VP of digital strategy and operations Janice Liu; VP of planning Charlene St. Amant; and VP of performance and programmatic Brian Cuddy. Liu, for one, has an agency background, but has also worked client-side (heading digital campaign optimization for CIBC) and was previously an entrepreneur (in 2011, she founded vintage e-commerce platform Shoppalu). All three execs are young – all in their early 30s – which Leland says is atypical for agencies. "They have a unique take on our industry," she says, adding that she considers them highly academic with a "different energy."

CASES

1. Just say no to driving high

Ahead of cannabis legalization, the federal government turned to Cossette Media to create "Don't Drive High," a campaign targeting 13- to 24-year-olds to dispel myths about driving high. Along with social initiatives, including the fed's first Facebook chatbot, Cossette created a mobile game, which simulated the feeling of impaired driving, and synced ads to D-Box theatre seats, simulating a crash for 2.5 million moviegoers. Talk about driving change.



2. Telus wanted to start a dialogue around cyberbullying. So the agency changed wifi networks in popular public places to say "End Bullying" and had kids read the brand's anti-bullying message right before they connected online.



3. After introducing Canadians to Tweed in a campaign, the shop invited them to get to know the brand, and cannabis, a little better. It did this by tracking popular search trends and targeted people with educational pot content.

► To read the full cases, go to mediawinners.strategyonline.ca/2018

"I think as leaders you have to look for those unique perspectives," she says. "Believe in and back your internal talent. Elevate them."

The unique perspective of its leaders – and the close relationship with Cossette – also means creativity bleeds into the media process. CSO Wes Wolch says this year the agency has created work that exists outside of traditional media channels. Pointing to the latest iteration of its long-running anti-bullying campaign with Telus that hacked WiFi logins (see sidebar), he explains how

Cossette Media "created a channel that didn't exist."

"One of the key consumer insights that came to the table is that if you look at kids and teens and mobile devices, anywhere they go, they look for the wifi," says Wolch. So the agency created a free network in public locations with the name "#boing." When a user logged on, however, they were greeted with an invitation to take Telus' anti-cyberbullying pledge.

Wolch says that while this isn't the same as a media buy – a wifi network isn't a buyable channel – it was a unique approach to targeting, and that kind of creativity is necessary in today's disrupted market.

"I'm of the mindset that campaigns are essentially dead," he says, adding that with more knowledge about where consumers are on their purchase journeys – whether they're in the discovery, purchasing or the evaluation and loyalty stage – agencies need to plan around the relevant touchpoints.

Wolch explains that the agency's growing data sciences team's task is to evaluate the proposed media mix against touchpoints. By incorporating data at each stage, he says, campaigns run on more efficient media plans, and the insights feed longer-term planning.

Leon adds that although data sometimes feels like a "shiny object," it plays a crucial role in striking a balance between short-term and long-term thinking.

As the agency puts more manpower behind data sciences in order to produce advanced analytics, Leon says it's able to amp up consultative and advisory services around that data and tech.

"We see ourselves as having a duty to educate our clients," explains Leon. "And we have the tools to do that."

Congratulations to our valued partners on their nominations!

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Agency of the Year

CAMP JEFFERSON

Media Agency of the Year

cossette media



PHD digs deep into data

BY PATTI SUMMERFIELD

PHD CANADA IS ENDING THE YEAR ON A HIGH.

Solid growth – thanks to new business wins and client retention – and international award show recognition have helped to boost the bottom line and buoy staff spirit. A recent realignment of the agency structure and 30 new hires over the past 12 months have been major contributors to these accomplishments.

That restructuring followed the exit of long-time PHD Canada president and then-CEO of the Omnicom media network, Fred Forster, early in the year. Omnicom Media Group CIO Cam Reston took over as Omnicom CEO and Alain Desormiers, CEO and founder of Touché, took on the PHD CEO remit.

In April, another PHD vet, Caroline Moul stepped up as president of the Canadian arm, after helping to shape the agency's digital and data capabilities as SVP and managing director for digital media.

"We now have bench strength when it comes to digital, technology, and marketing effectiveness," says Moul. "As the media market becomes increasingly complex,

insightful expertise and thought leadership are much more valuable and critical to clients' business outcomes."

Over the past few years, the agency has transformed from a traditional media agency to a data-fueled organization by strengthening its marketing science capabilities so that work is rooted in research, modeling and business intelligence. As part of its transformation, the agency has brought silos of capabilities together as a collective team with programmatic, search and social under the performance umbrella.

While the marketing science team is critical for ensuring client business success, PHD has defined itself as an agency that puts strategy before tactics.

"Strategy has never been as important as it is today in terms of the big picture with long-term growth and short-term sales," Moul says. "We have reinvigorated the agency and our training and development program to further reinforce our strategic strength."

One of its unique differentiators has been Source, a global operating system and collaboration tool launched



NEW KEY BUSINESS
Fountain Tire, Ministry of Education, Paccar, Stericycle, Made in Space, Bishop Strachan School, BMW

STAFF
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in 2012. The system enables planners and buyers to follow the latest trends and brainstorm with counterparts throughout the agency network. Clients get access to the best minds from around the world and employees get points when one of their ideas is used.

In addition to Source, PHD is also using OMNI, a marketing and insights platform launched by Omnicom. It essentially identifies and defines a single view of the consumer at scale, which can be dynamically tracked across media, creative and CRM.

With the adoption of marketing tech to propel a data-driven approach from customer experience through to acquisition and measurement, Moul says media agencies, like PHD, need to evolve.

By transforming into a data-fueled org, Moul says the shop is now often at the table when clients bring outside consultants into the mix. This allows PHD to have a voice in the process and a chance to challenge directions or methodologies that don't align with its client objectives.

"We unlock the power of data to drive every element of what we do," she says. "It's important to focus in on this because clients see the value and more often they are looking to us for consultancy projects beyond media planning and buying."

CASES



1. Getting women talking about cervical cancer
In a global-first, PHD helped women who don't know what steps to take to prevent cervical cancer. The first thing was to destigmatize the conversation and show women how uncomplicated the prevention measures are. The agency worked with influencers to create some of the first-ever Instagram polls and had them test people's knowledge of the disease. If the majority got the answer wrong, influencers created follow-up content to further educate them.



2. For Thrive's "In the Moment" campaign, PHD set out to reach smokers by analyzing social media posts about smoking. It then geo-targeted locations and even used photo recognition technology to identify and target who and where people light up.

3. Tapping into hockey culture, Scotiabank and PHD rolled out "Scotiaskaters." The program saw child hockey players - and big fans of the Montreal Canadiens - be interviewed by TVA reporters and then invited to have the first skate on the ice before a game.



► For full cases, go to maoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018



Edelman digs its heels into paid media

BY MEGAN HAYNES

Above: A photo illustration shows the many faces (and hairstyles) of Edelman's staff.

WHILE EDELMAN HAS OFFERED PAID MEDIA AND marketing services for its clients over the past four years, this year, the shop beefed up its media buying capabilities with the hiring of Nirmala Bahall (who once led media on the Walmart business at digital agency Mediative) as the new SVP of the paid team.

Considering the organic and, well, unpaid nature of PR, it's an interesting move on the part of the public relations firm, which counts KFC, HP and The Calgary Zoo among its clients.

But the discipline has been a fast-growing one at the Toronto-headquartered agency, says Lisa Kimmel, president and CEO of Edelman Canada. Putting paid media behind public relations or social content has nearly doubled in terms of revenue coming into the agency year-over-year, she says.

There is simply so much content today and while earned media is always going to be the agency's bread-

and-butter, paid search and social buys reach a broader audience and help create longevity, as evergreen brand content can be resurfaced at a later date, Kimmel says. "And, this way, clients don't have to go to media agencies for their media solutions."

Emphasis on paid media is all part of the global agency's shift towards being a full-service communications marketing firm.

It began in 2014 when the PR firm, which has offices in Calgary, Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto, brought aboard Jordan Doucette as its first creative director. Doucette, who left the PR shop to return to Taxi and is now an ECD at Leo Burnett Chicago, has since been replaced by Andrew Simon, who – despite being at the agency for three years, still seems to surprise some clients.

"They get that 'titled dog head' look," says Edelman's chief creative officer, who was previously the CCO at Toronto creative agency Cundari.

Since then, plenty of PR firms have added creative types to their roster, and Edelman's own team has grown rapidly, with more than 15 people, says Simon, up from eight when he first joined. (He adds that other departments, like digital and production, also have creative staffers who often do cross-over work.)

The result has been an increase in not only creatively-led PR work, but also full AOR assignments with brands, he adds. In 2017, the shop added the Calgary Zoo among its client list, and was tasked with handling both PR as well as paid media.

He pegs the shop's expansion directly to changing client demands. "I feel like we're a Swiss Army knife," says Simon. "Sometimes you need scissors, sometimes you need something else. It's all communications. For

some [clients] we're their influencer agency. For others, their social agency or AOR."

He points to an influencer-led campaign the agency did with KFC as an example of that blurring of roles.

For the massive Canada Day 150th celebration, the brand tapped social media influencer (and the "internet's favourite dad") Brittlestar, to explain to its American neighbours why the True North is awesome.

The video featured a variety of dad-approved jokes (pennies are just pocket weights; if angels had food trucks, they'd serve poutine) and ends with the kicker: beloved American icon Colonel Sanders actually lived in Canada from 1965 to 1980. He does so while sitting in a giant inflatable KFC bucket chair (it's exactly how it sounds). "There's nothing more Canadian than claiming ownership of the people who come here," Stewart Reynolds, a.k.a Brittlestar, told podcast The Feed shortly after the video was released.

The spot is cheesy but also earnest. It fit well with, but also poked fun at, the trend of candid marketing that was sweeping the QSR category at the time, says Simon. (Think Subway's focus on "real people living their real lives" in its latest campaign; A&W's overt

commitment to "keeping it real" with real foods and less waste packaging; or Tim Horton's 2017 "Perfect Pair" that featured consumers talking about their siblings, partners and loved ones.)

The video has since racked up a total of 60 million views across social channels, with the bulk (55 million) coming from Facebook.

Part of the changing role of PR shops stems from the evolving relationships brands have with their agency partners in general, with many moving towards more project-by-project roles, says Simon. The result has been a stronger need for "true brand stewards" who can highlight and communicate brand narratives – something PR agencies (which have historically helped brands control the narrative externally through the media) can excel at, he says.

"The competitive sphere has opened up so much more widely today," Simon adds. "Sometimes, we're up against consultancies, sometimes it's ad agencies, sometimes it's PR. There is no one competitor anymore, and the model [we have], gives us the flexibility to play."

CASES



1. How to cook... KFC?!

To help KFC reverse consumer backlash around the quality of its food, Edelman created a cooking school for KFC that would help lift the veil. Led by real cooks, classes gave consumers an inside look at every step of the process, from preparing the farm-raised chicken, to breading, to serving. The "open kitchen" welcomed students from Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Mississauga, Saskatoon and Halifax into its restaurants. Garnering more than 133 million impressions, the campaign drew everyone from fried chicken fanatics to reluctant skeptics, combining earned and paid media that took misconceptions about the brand straight to the chopping block.

2. Bece's plant-based dining experiences to promote its heart-healthy products.

3. It's the 12 days of Christmas – WestJet style. The "12 Flights of Christmas" campaign brought kids imagination to life in 12 different cities.



► For full cases, go to praoywinners.strategyonline.ca/2018

AGENCY OF THE YEAR | JUDGES

Agency of the Year



Christopher Andrews
President
The&Partnership



Rob Daintree
Director, Marketing
Communications
WestJet



Bob Froese
Founder/CEO
Bob's Your Uncle



Addie Gillespie
CD
123w



Alyssa Huggins
VP, Marketing
Pizza Pizza



Shawn King
Formerly
Arrivals+Departures



Valya Kruk
CSO/EVP
Tank & Grey



Nancy Modrcin
VP, Marketing
Metro



Tom Olesinski
CEO
Havas Canada



Vanda Provato
VP, Marketing & Category
Second Cup



Doug Robinson
Founding Partner
Doug&Partners



Nancy Rozender
VP
Martel et Compagnie



Uwe Stueckmann
SVP, Marketing
Loblaws



Dominique Trudeau
President
Couleur locale

Design Agency of the Year



Allison Chambers
AD & Designer
Will Creative



Denise Cole
Co-Founder, Head of Art
Juliet



Josh Dunford
CEO
Burnkit



Marawan El-Asfahani
Co-Founder & CEO
Jackknife



Adam Goodman
VP, Marketing
UmbrA



Lauren Macdonald
Country Marketing Manager
IKEA Canada



John Pylypczak
President/Founding Partner
Concrete Design



Gabriella Rackoff
CD
Eighty-Eight



Bob Russell
Co-Founder, CD
Collective Arts Brewery



Stüssy Tschudin
Principal/Design Director
Forge Media + Design

PR Agency of the Year



Vicky Boudreau
Founding Partner
BICOM Communications



Brad Cicero
Director, Communications
& Public Affairs
Porter Airlines



David Doze
Founder & CEO
Pilot PMR



Julie Dunham
Manager, Communications
Shoppers Drug Mart



Adelaide Johnson
PR & Social Media
Freshii



Francois Lefebvre
Director, Corporate Affairs
Molson Coors Canada



Caroline Losson
VP, Marketing
Keurig



Melissa Orozoco
Founder & CD
Yulu PR



Lisa Pasquin
President
Craft Public Relations



Julie Rusciolli
President
Maverick



Krista Webster
President & CEO
Veritas Communications

Media Agency of the Year



Heather Cameron
Sr. Director Creative & PR
Walmart Canada



Robin Hassan
Head, Integrated Marketing and Digital, Unilever



Kerry Mitchell
President
M/Six



Georgia Fong
Director, Brand Planning, Metrics and Insights, RBC



Terry Horton
Managing Director
Hearts & Science



Luke Moore
EVP Managing Director
Cundari



Brenda Gallant
Director, Marketing
Tourism PEI



Kristine Lyrette
President
Zenith



Jodi Peacock
Managing Director
The Media Kitchen



Darren Solomon
VP, Creative Strategy
Cineplex

Digital Agency of the Year



Trevor Carr
CEO/President
Noise Digital



Mitch Joel
Founder
Six Pixels



Rose Sauquillo
Freelance CD



Howard Chang
Co-Founder
theturnlab



Erin Kawalecki
CD
Tribal DDB



Max Sawka
ACD
OneMethod



James Connell
VP, eCommerce &
Customer Experience
Roots Canada



Lisa Mazurkewich
Director, Marketing &
Digital Experience
Starbucks



Angela Scardillo
SVP, Marketing
Best Buy Canada



Uri Gorodzinsky
Head, CPG Advertising
Amazon Canada



Deepak Mehmi
Group CD
Critical Mass



Dominic Tremblay
Grand Chief of Vision
TUX

MAKING THE STRATEGY PR AGENCY OF THE YEAR SHORTLIST IS NO SMALL FEAT. TO EVERY PERSON WHO MADE THIS POSSIBLE, WE WOULD LIKE TO SAY:

Thanks for all of your hard work Alex. Great work this year Allison. Thanks Amanda, we couldn't have done it without you. This is huge Andrea, thank you. Kudos Ashley, we really appreciate all that you do. Woohoo Brendan, thank you. We can't say it enough Cam, thank you. What a year, thank you Craig. Your work is much appreciated Dana. Thank you Danielle, thank you so much. Cheers to you Daphné, thanks for all of your hard work. You are a big part of this team David, thank you. Thank you AutoCoffee 3000, you were always there when we needed you. Thanks for all of your hard work Desiree. Great work this year Ekaterina. Thanks Elise, we couldn't have done it without you. This is huge Elyssa, thank you. Woohoo Erin, thank you. We can't say it enough Fatma, thank you. What a year, thank you Felicia. Much appreciated Gaëlle. Thank you Gen, thank you so much. Cheers to you Geoff, thanks for all of your hard work. You are a big part of this team Greg, thank you. Thank you late night pizza delivery guy, whatever your name is. Thanks for all of your hard work Hibaq. Great work this year Ian. Thanks Isabelle, we couldn't have done it without you. This is huge Jacklyn, thank you. Kudos Jasleen, we really appreciate all that you do. Woohoo Jen, thank you. We can't say it enough Jennifer, thank you. For all that you do, thank you so much Jenny. What a year, thank you Jessica. Much appreciated Jihan. Thank you Karl, thank you so much. Thanks Katie, we couldn't have done it without you. Cheers to you Kathleen, thanks for all of your hard work. You are a big part of this team Kay, thank you. No one drives a cab like you, thanks Jimmy. Thanks for all of your hard work Kevin. Great work this year Kristen. Thanks Kyle, we couldn't have done it without you. Twice as much gratitude for Lauren and Lauren. Kudos Leanne, we really appreciate all that you do. Woohoo Leha, thank you. We can't say it enough Leslie, thank you. What a year, thank you Lindsay. Your work is much appreciated Lindsey. Thank you Maddie, thank you so much. Cheers to you Maggie, thanks for all of your hard work. You are a big part of this team Marc, thank you. Betty, thank you for giving us a home away from home. Thanks for all of your hard work Marie-Emmanuelle. Great work this year Marie-Eve. Thanks Marie-Philip, we couldn't have done it without you. This is huge Mary, thank you. Kudos Melissa, we really appreciate all that you do. Thank you, thank you, thank you to all three Michelles. What a year, thank you Natasha. Thank you Nicole, thank you so much. A big double thank you to both Rachels. You are a big part of this team Robyn, thank you. Thanks for keeping our energy up Snack Lady. Thanks for all of your hard work Rosie. Great work this year Sandra. Thanks Sarah, we couldn't have done it without you. This is huge Scott, thank you. Kudos Shafiq, we really appreciate all that you do. Woohoo Stephanie, thank you. We can't say it enough Tariq, thank you. Much appreciated Toru. Thank you Tyler, thank you so much. Cheers to you Val, thanks for all of your hard work this year. You are a big part of this team Victoria, thank you.

AND FINALLY, THANKS TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF OUR WORLD-CLASS CLIENTS WHO INSPIRE US TO DO OUR BEST WORK EVERYDAY. THANK YOU SO MUCH.

AGENCY OF THE YEAR | PROCESS & SHORTLISTS

Strategy's 2018 Agency of the Year awards began with an open call for Canadian agencies to submit their best campaigns from the past 12 months.

All eligible creative, media, digital, PR and design agencies entered with comprehensive campaign case studies (five for AOY and three for MAOY, DAOY, PRAOY and Design AOY). From there, separate cross-industry and cross-country jury

panels marked the work online and in isolation.

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

Judges with conflicts were omitted from the

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

AOY	DESIGN AOY	MAOY	PRAOY	DAOY
Cossette	Zulu Alpha Kilo	Touché!	The Colony Project	FCB Canada / Rethink (tie)
John St.	Cossette / Lg2 (tie)	OMD Canada	Narrative	Bleublancrouge
Zulu Alpha Kilo	John St.	Cossette Media / PHD (tie)	Edelman Canada	Sid Lee
Rethink	Rethink	UM Canada	Weber Shandwick Canada	Cossette
Sid Lee	Sid Lee	Jungle Media	Citizen Relations	Grip Limited
FCB Canada	Leo Burnett	Initiative	DDB Canada	Ogilvy & Mather
Lg2	DDB Canada	Media Experts	MSL Group	Zulu Alpha Kilo
Taxi		Mindshare Canada	Pomp and Circumstance	J. Walter Thompson Canada
BBDO Canada		Dentsu Aegis Network	Cohn & Wolfe	Virtue
McCann Worldgroup Canada		Havas Canada	Paradigm PR	Lg2
DDB Canada		Wavemaker Canada	North Strategic	
Leo Burnett			Media Profile	
Anomaly			Argyle PR	
Camp Jefferson			NKPR	



Congratulations to **Anomaly** on your AOY nomination.



Cossette and SickKids claimed AOY Gold in 2017.

1990
Gold: McKim Advertising
Silver: Cossette
Communication-Marketing
Bronze: Baker Lovick Advertising

1991
Gold: Chiat/Day/Mojo
Silver: Baker Lovick:BBDO
Bronze: MacLaren:Lintas

1992
Gold: Chiat/Day
Silver: Ogilvy & Mather
Bronze: MacLaren:Lintas

1993
Gold: Geoffrey B. Roche & Partners Advertising
Silver (tie): McKim Baker Lovick/BBDO, Taxi
Bronze: BCP

1994
Gold: MacLaren:Lintas
Silver: BBDO Canada
Bronze: Geoffrey B. Roche & Partners Advertising

1995
Gold: MacLaren McCann
Silver: BBDO Canada
Bronze: Leo Burnett

1996
Gold: Leo Burnett
Silver: Palmer Jarvis Communications
Bronze: BBDO Canada

1997
Gold: Roche Macaulay & Partners Advertising
Silver: Palmer Jarvis Communications
Bronze: Leo Burnett

1998
Gold: Roche Macaulay & Partners Advertising
Silver: BBDO Canada
Bronze: Palmer Jarvis DDB

1999
Gold: Palmer Jarvis DDB
Silver: Ammirati Puris Lintas
Bronze: Young & Rubicam

2000
Gold: Palmer Jarvis DDB
Silver: Taxi
Bronze: MacLaren McCann

2001
Gold: Palmer Jarvis DDB
Silver: Ammirati Puris
Bronze: Taxi

2002
Gold: Taxi
Silver: Bensimon-Byrne
Bronze: Zig

2003
Gold: Taxi
Silver: Palmer Jarvis DDB
Bronze: Downtown Partners DDB

2004
Gold: Taxi
Silver: Zig
Bronze: DDB

2005
Gold: Taxi
Silver: Rethink
Bronze: BBDO Canada

2006
Gold: Rethink
Silver: DDB
Bronze: Lowe Roche

2007
Gold: DDB
Silver: Ogilvy & Mather
Bronze: Taxi

2008
Gold: Taxi
Silver: BBDO Canada
Bronze: DDB

2009
Gold: DDB
Silver: Rethink
Bronze: Zig

2010
Gold: DDB
Silver: Taxi
Bronze: Sid Lee

2011
Gold: BBDO
Silver: DDB
Bronze: Taxi

2012
Gold: DDB
Silver: John St.
Bronze: Taxi

2013
Gold: John St.
Silver: Taxi
Bronze: BBDO

2014
Gold: Leo Burnett
Silver: Rethink
Bronze: DDB

2015
Gold: John St.
Silver: Taxi
Bronze: BBDO

2016
Gold: Cossette
Silver: Leo Burnett
Bronze: John St.

2017
Gold: Cossette
Silver: J. Walter Thompson
Bronze: Lg2

2018
Gold: Cossette
Silver: John St.
Bronze: Zulu Alpha Kilo



TOP SHOPS: TAKE TWO

Strategy is shining a spotlight on Canadian shops who are constantly striving to perfect the creative process, investing in new tech and evolving their skills to remain essential production partners.

In this second annual sponsored series we're profiling who's who in the crafts of editing, film direction, sound design, special effects and all aspects of end-to-end production expertise.

Don't miss this opportunity to showcase your shop's capabilities and accomplishments in *strategy's* March/April 2019 issue.

The series will also be published on strategyonline.ca and in *strategyDaily*, reaching an even broader industry audience.

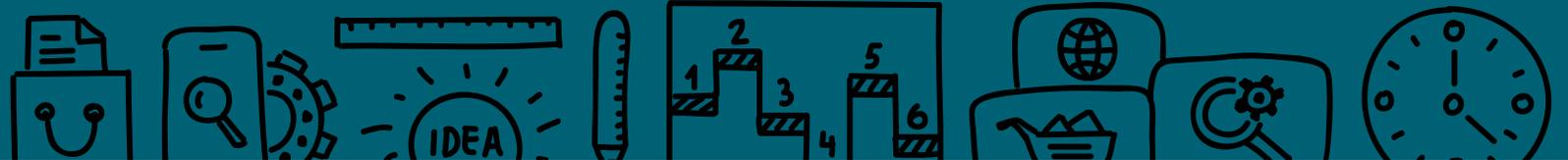
Space is limited, so confirm your spot now and start building cred with more of Canada's top creative agencies and brands.

*participants will appear in the order in which they commit to avoid alphabetical discrimination

strategy

Streeting: **March/April 2019**

Commitment deadline: **November 30th**



AIDAN SHANKMAN BRINGS TIM'S TO LIFE IN THE GROCERY AISLE

You might not know Aidan Shankman, but if you've been to a grocery store, you've likely seen his work.

Shankman is one of the marketers behind Tim Hortons' entrance into the grocery channel in 2015, when the iconic restaurant chain set its sights beyond QSR, putting its coffee on Canadian store shelves and winning customers over in a new space.

In his previous role as senior brand manager, Shankman, now the senior manager of marketing operations, was tasked with creating "an out-of-home Tim's experience" by building out a marketing plan that would get the support of its restaurant and retail partners.

Shankman wrote the brief and managed subsequent campaign executions, from "Shelf Talker" to "Cart Thru," as well as (literally) helped build displays in-store and spearhead new coffee product launches exclusively for grocery.

Today, Tim's has driven \$155.5 million in grocery sales over the year ending Sept. 2018, rising in its grocery coffee category from #5 to the #1 brand, and is sold in several grocery stores such as Costco, Loblaws and Metro, and even on Amazon.

A graduate of Queen's University's Smith School of Business, Shankman began working in the QSR category at other classic Canadian chains, Harvey's and Swiss Chalet, then within CPG at Kraft, followed by a two-year stint at P&G. Now 27 years young, Shankman recalls meeting with the brand in the months leading up to its acquisition by investment firm 3G Capital in 2015.

It was perfect timing, says Shankman, who notes Tim's was ready to enter the consumer packaged goods market on the tails of McDonald's Canada launching their own McCafe grocery brand with Kraft in 2014.

A "small, scrappy team" of approximately four people –

Shankman included – was put together to lead the brand's entrance into the category, growing to a team of seven tasked with creating a national marketing calendar and figuring out new systems to coordinate sales, logistics and distribution for a brand new channel – all in under a year.

Shankman joined the marketing team in March 2015 and by October of that year, the Tim's grocery category was born.

"Doing all of that from scratch with no blueprint was really interesting," he says. "From a grocery perspective, we had no data available, we had no past campaign results, we had no strategy built in... so you just have to trust your gut and go back to that really simple shopper mindset – put yourself in the mind of the consumer walking down the coffee aisle."

Taking Tim's out of QSR wasn't always an easy sell. When it first launched, a loyalty barrier existed between Tim's restaurant and retail customers. So to get people to want to purchase its coffee products in-store – and trust that it had a reliable Tim's coffee taste – the team created the "Shelf Talker" campaign that featured a mini Tim Hortons restaurant serving single-serve coffee in the grocery aisle. A follow-up "Cart-Thru" campaign in 2016 aimed to get shoppers out of auto-pilot and take notice of Tim Horton's through in-store drive-thru that took orders for a

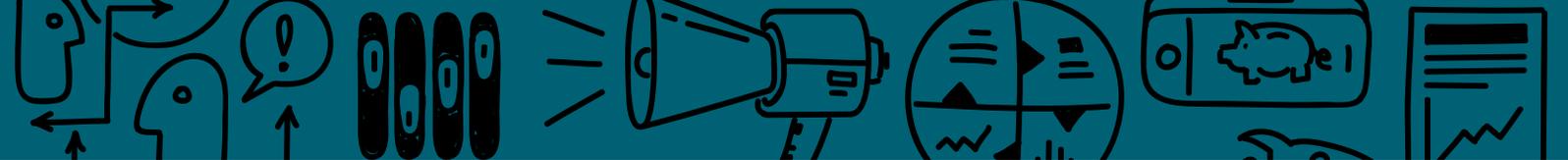
single-serve cup of Tim's.

Now retail "needs to become the DNA of this brand," rather than a category within its product offering. His next big focus? Ecomm, says Shankman. "As all of these ecommerce channels continue to develop, as consumers begin to turn to non-traditional models for ordering food or beverages, [the challenge will be finding the] right ones for Tim's that complement our restaurant division and where can we get to market the quickest."

Top: A barista serves up Tim's coffee to shoppers as part of the QSR's entrance into the grocery space.

Bottom: Aidan Shankman with a cup of (what else?) Tim Hortons coffee.





BUDWEISER'S TELIS CARAYANNAKIS TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Some might say the world is Telis Carayannakis' Budweiser Stage.

Having got his start at Google as an intern and then PepsiCo as an associate marketing manager, Carayannakis later landed at Labatt Breweries and rose up the ranks to eventually lead the transformation of the Molson Amphitheatre to become the Budweiser Stage in 2017.

"When you take over something that has become a bit of a love mark for Canadians like the Molson Amphitheatre, people approach it with a bit of caution," says Carayannakis. "When we started, the sentiment was mixed to negative."

What could have been a name change became more of an extreme makeover, with Carayannakis and a team of agencies championing the idea to invest Budweiser's budget not only in promotion, but in the consumer experience itself.

Working alongside Anomaly, Mosaic, Veritas, Vizeum and Live Nation (which Budweiser signed a multi-year partnership with in 2017), the strategy was to create a "better, faster and longer" experience for consumers, according to Carayannakis, who is currently a senior brand manager for Budweiser.

Carayannakis, who handles the brand's music-related initiatives, says his role in the stage involved every aspect of the venue rebrand: from leading the brief and new partnerships, to extending contactless payment technology throughout the venue and handling the headlining concerts – all of which is done through relationships he's fostered with venue contractors, artists and Live Nation.

With the goal of creating a "fan-first" experience, the brand manager and his team also created an artist walkway, featuring commissioned work by local artists, as well as rejuvenated the River Bar and added a Bud's



and Burgers station featuring Muskoka, Ont.'s, famous burger joint Webers. That's in addition to "Budweiser Brewery Fresh," which serves fresh beer delivered straight from a London, Ont., brewery. Bud also partnered with Uber on a pick-up and drop-off zone.

To create more of a tangible, visual link to the brand, Budweiser placed a brightly-lit branded marquee at the entrance, which also has a crowd-drawing effect. Much like the Toronto sign located at Nathan Phillips Square, or the Spaceman at Coachella, Carayannakis sees Bud's own version as the "icon" of the venue. "When you walk [into the venue], there are people lined up, like 50 people deep, just to take a photo [with] this thing," he says.

"When you have people who love the venue, they're going to stay longer, they're going to

spend more," says Carayannakis, adding that the "better, faster, longer" strategy resulted in a boost in beer sales by 20% as the brand increased portable beer carts and places to get a drink by 13%.

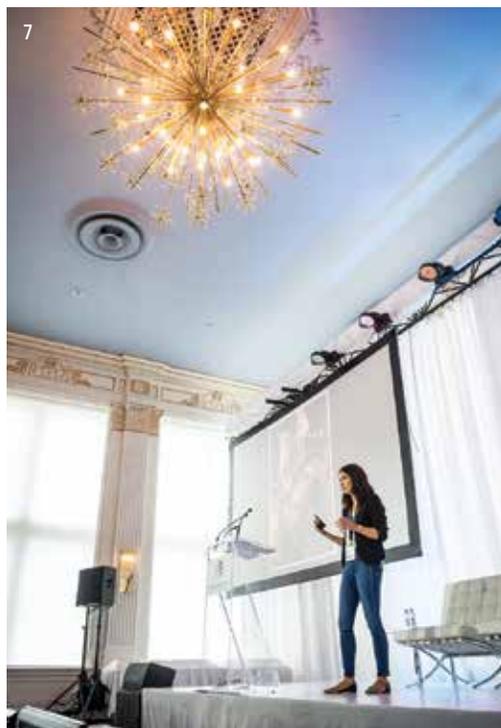
After a PR campaign introduced the venue to media, Carayannakis rolled out a red carpet for its opening night – a music-filled event that drew upon the insight that fans love on-stage collaborations at festivals, he says, bringing Toronto's Broken Social Scene and Portugal the Man together and surprising fans by incorporating Budweiser's famous "Red Light" technology for the encore.

"[Telis] is someone who doesn't see campaigns as short-lived transactions," says Mandeep Malik, associate professor of marketing at McMaster University, who first met Carayannakis during the Canada's Next Top Ad Exec program he runs for universities. "[He] knows how to tug on those emotions and leverage that relationship that a customer has [with a brand]."

Right: Telis Carayannakis helped put on a show for the grand opening of Budweiser Stage.

MARKETING EVOLUTION C-SUITE SUMMIT | 2018

This year's MES explored marketing in the age of disruption, particularly as the role of the CMO expands and building brands for the future becomes imperative. The event was held in the stunning ballroom at the Omni King Edward Hotel in Toronto, with advisory board co-chairs Jason Chaney from Koho, and Diana Frost from Mars Wrigley Canada, MCing the event.



1. MES advisory board co-chairs Jason Chaney, CCO of Koho, and Diana Frost, VP of marketing at Mars Wrigley kick off the day event. | 2. Tim Hortons' global CMO, Axel Schwan, on where the brand is heading and why. | 3. Nancy Marcus, North American CMO for Kruger Products, with Canopy Growth's chief commercial officer, David Bigioni, on the evolving role of the CMO. | 4. The MES crowd at the Omni King Edward Hotel's Crystal Ballroom. | 5. Greenhouse co-founder and director of brand and marketing, Emma Knight, on scaling up. | 6. Adam Grogan, SVP, marketing, innovation, research and development for Maple Leaf Foods, shared the CPG's reinvention journey. | 7. Lauren MacDonald, IKEA Canada's CMO delves into the retailer's renewed focus on purpose. | 8. Wealthsimple's marketing director, Nick White, on how to build a human-focused brand via storytelling. | 9. Johanna Faigelman, founding partner and CEO of Human Branding, shares how Molson channeled anthropology.



STRATEGY AWARDS | 2018

The gala for the awards, developed in association with the Account Planning Group of Canada, took place following MES on Sept. 20. FCB/Six took home the Grand Prix for PFLAG's "Destination Pride."

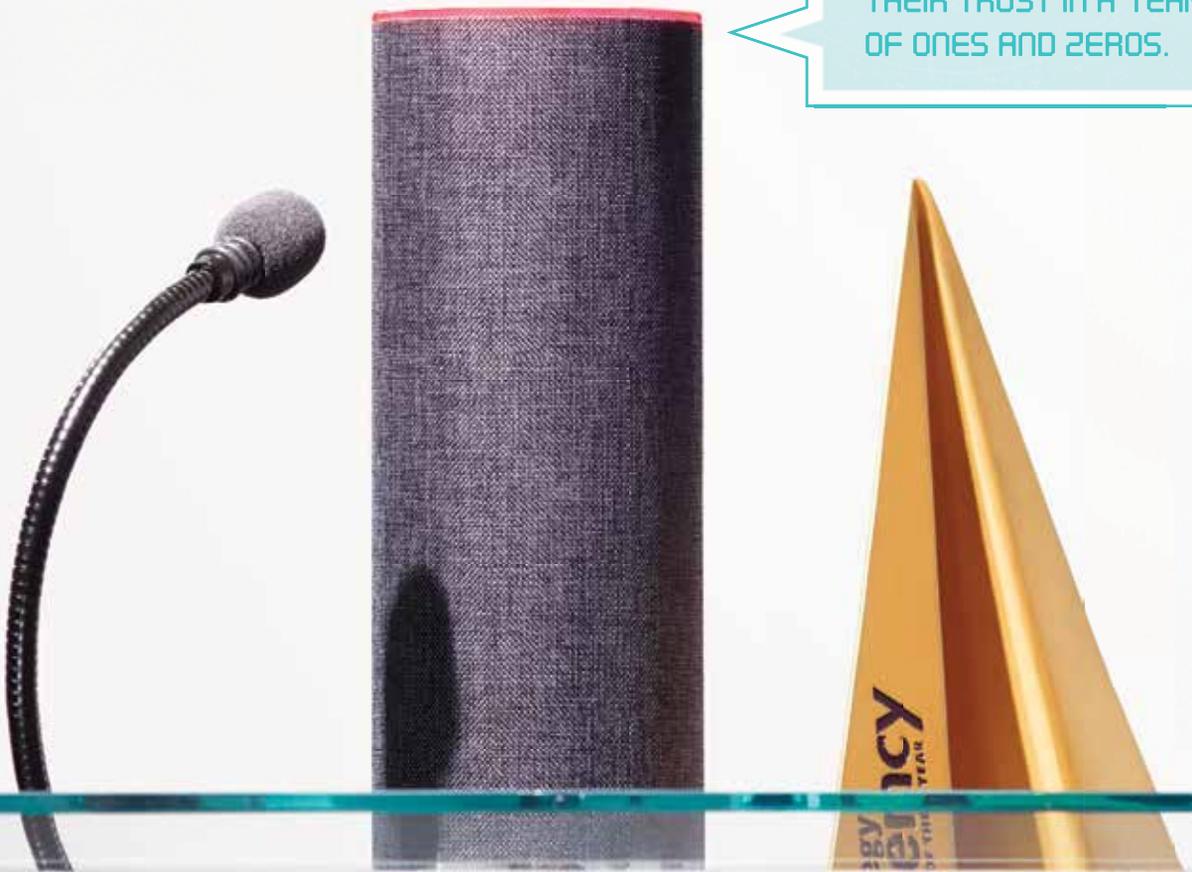


1. SickKids Foundation and Cossette celebrate their big wins for the "SickKids VS - All In" work. | 2. The FCB Canada team accepts five awards for its "Anything But Sorry" campaign. | 3. Annie Rowe, director of strategy group, Bensimon Byrne. | 4. BBDO's Zach Kula and Chris Booth. | 5. Max Valiquette, VP head of planning at Publicis plays his Strategy Awards host role well. | 6. Ogilvy's digital strategist Crystal Sales and CCO Brian Murray. | 7. The FCB and FCB/Six team celebrate their "Destination Pride" Grand Prix win for PFLAG. | 8. A&W Canada's Susan Senecal and Tom Newitt accept the ACA Gold Medal from the association's CEO Ron Lund. | 9. Ian MacKenzie, ECD at FCB/Six, with one of many Golds for its data-driven platform for PFLAG. | 10. Megan Towers, ED of strategy at John St. | 11. Zulu Alpha Kilo president Mike Sutton with a Gold for the agency's "Common Ground" series for Harley-Davidson. | 12. Strategy Awards co-chair Lori Davidson of SickKids presents the Grand Prix.

PHOTOS BY MATT FORSYTHE

2020 STRATEGY AGENCY OF THE YEAR

I'D LIKE TO THANK ALL THE ALGORITHMS FOR THEIR TIRELESS WORK, THE CLOUD FOR ALWAYS BEING THERE AND BELIEVING IN OUR VISION, AND OUR BRAVE CLIENTS FOR PUTTING THEIR TRUST IN A TEAM OF ONES AND ZEROS.



A gentle reminder from Arrivals + Departures that people are always at the heart of great work.



The new establishment innovators

**It's time to nominate the
original thinkers (and doers!)**

The New Establishment program (the successor to *Marketing's* 30 Under 30) celebrates the junior- and mid-career professionals who are changing Canada's communication industries.

The final chapter – on the heels of the Media and Brand winners – is the Innovators.

They may come from any side of the industry, any type of agency or partner company, as long as their achievements go far beyond just Day Job territory. They've created something new, launched something original, challenged conventions, and triggered big change. They are the individuals whose grit, initiative and accomplishments the industry should know about.

Nominate someone for consideration (and glory!)

Nominations are open now until December 15.
newestablishment.strategyonline.ca/innovators

MIA^(S)

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