

INCITE



INCITE

ABOUT THE COVER

The grass can be greener on the other side! On p. 15, Dr. Green Lawn Care turns data visualization into strategic targeting to successfully sow the seeds of customer acquisition and retention. Discover how this family-owned business stood out with customers in a hyper-competitive industry and grew sales 15-30% within a narrow six-week marketing window.

The cover of this edition of *INCITE* was printed on Supreme Silk 100lb FSC-certified cover stock on a Heidelberg SM102 10 colour-perfecting press. It was printed in four colours with an additional Pantone® ink to provide more vibrance and detail. The special effect of the textured stems was accomplished by overlaying a raised spot grit UV. The glossy droplet effect was achieved using a raised spot gloss UV.

Text pages are printed on 80lb text Rolland Enviro® Satin, 100% Post-Consumer Waste, FSC-certified stock. Made from 100% sustainable recycled fibre, and with biogas as a main energy source, Rolland's Enviro product line has the smallest environmental footprint in North America's paper industry.



The Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) is a global, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of responsible forest management worldwide, based on agreed upon principles that are supported by environmental, social and economic stakeholders.



This project is produced using Bullfrog Power® electricity generated from renewable sources such as wind, solar and low-impact hydro sources.

THE YEAR AHEAD

ISSUE



04

Bringing
Resilience
into Frame

11

Mapping
the Future

08

Cultural
Disruptors

15

Case Study:
Growing
Opportunities

19

Case Stories:
A Collection of
Global Inspiration

14

Playing
Mind Games



29

Investing in the
Human Condition



31

The Work of
Visualization



36

Mapping
Your Way to
Advantage



Delivering more for a sustainable future.

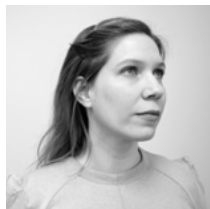
When we reduce our environmental impact at Canada Post, it helps your business do the same.

We're committed to using 100% renewable energy and becoming waste-free by 2030. Our fleet is also being transformed to be fully electric by 2040, and we're on the path to net-zero emissions by 2050.

We're working hard to deliver a more sustainable future for our employees, our communities and the businesses we proudly serve. Learn more about the steps we're taking at canadapost.ca/deliveringmore



IDEAS TO INCITE ACTION THROUGH *MAPPING*



You can unfold the world on a map. They create boundaries, provide different views and point the way. Maps help you visualize a larger world through a sense of distance and proportion. They make objects tangible, actionable, understandable, relatable.

Maps are the key to seeing – and understanding – any world in new ways.

In this issue, we look at how companies are turning to different methods of mapping and visualization to gain new perspectives, find focus in uncertainty and see data in tangible ways that drive insights and actions.

We look at how businesses can use visualization and mapping tools to create smarter strategies against the backdrop of growing market complexity and volatility.

Future-focused thinker Sean Moffitt explores mapping the future in a “super-CAFFEINATED” world. Disruption strategist Shawn Kanungo explains how true disruptors are building their own universes to capture the imagination and loyalty of consumers. AI thought leader Bilal Jaffery shares critical evidence about brand and consumer misalignment that is hard to capture through transactional data practices. Additionally, four experts from different fields share what visualization means to them.

If you take one thing away from this issue, it should be that in a vulnerable Canadian marketing economy, brands need to look past questions of recessionary spending to focus on the in-real-life (IRL) deficit facing brands and the valuable role of marketing in creating business resilience.

Es Rottschafer
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

CONTRIBUTORS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Es Rottschafer, CSO | Fieldmarshal

COPY EDITORS

Jason Winders, Sr. Content Strategist/Writer | The&Partnership
Avery Friedlander, Freelance Copy Editor & Proofreader

CONTENT

Jamie Brand, Art Director & Illustrator | jamiebrand.ca
Patrick Collister, Editor | The Caples Awards & Directory Magazine
Bilal Jaffery, Head of Customer Data and Marketing Platforms | Accenture
Shawn Kanungo, Strategist/Speaker/Author | shawnkanungo.com
Diana Lucaci, Co-Founder & CEO | True Impact
Sean Moffitt, Managing Director | Cygnus Sprints and Futureproofing
Trong Nguyen, Technical Designer | The&Partnership
Ian Pierpoint, Founder & CEO | Further&Further
Es Rottschafer, CSO | Fieldmarshal
Jason Winders, Sr. Content Strategist/Writer | The&Partnership

EDITORIAL CREATIVE DIRECTION

Tyler Serr, CCO | Fieldmarshal

PRODUCTION & MANAGEMENT

Christine Kincaid, Vice-President & COO | Mediaplus
Don Masters, President & Creative Director | Mediaplus
Mark Skinner, Senior Art Director | Mediaplus
Gemma van Breemen, Account Director | Mediaplus

FRENCH ADAPTATION

Anglocom
TRSB
Versacom

PRINTING

The Lowe-Martin Group

CANADA POST

MARKETING

Nadia Chegrinec, Director, Sales Enablement & Event Marketing
Danielle Doiron, General Manager, Marketing
Rob Simon, Enterprise Marketing Manager, Smartmail Marketing
Kristi Tomasin, Director, Smartmail Marketing

FRENCH COPY EDITING

Normand Miron, Managing Writer-Editor, Marketing

DIGITAL SERVICES

Mahesh Abeyewardene, Web Publisher, UX Team
Marisela Balbi, Project Implementation Officer
Sam Berlot, Visual Designer
Karen Opas, User Experience Manager
Brandon Smollet, Digital Content

FIND US AT

INCITE Online: canadapost.ca/incite
INCITE is published by Canada Post.

All published contents are ©2023 Canada Post Corporation.
May not be reprinted without permission. The articles appearing within this publication reflect the opinions and attitudes of their respective authors and not necessarily those of the publisher.
™ Trademark of Canada Post Corporation. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



BRINGING RESILIENCE INTO FRAME

In a marketplace defined by disruption, we must see past the reactivity of recessions and recovery to bring marketing resilience into frame.

Key Takeaways

A misalignment between brands and people is causing a crisis of relevance.

Marketing needs to get past questions of recessionary spending.

Aligning marketing to people is critical to creating resilience.

The Canadian marketplace is a wild mix. Personal anxiety. Social concern. Pent-up consumer demand. Despite strong consumer spending driving economic growth, Canadian consumer confidence has declined to record lows, according to the Bloomberg Nanos Canadian Confidence Index.

While economists expect a bumpy recessionary landing in 2023, that fact doesn't take into consideration the impact of the serial uncertainty we are experiencing at home and abroad.

What does this all mean to marketing in uncertain times? Right now, we're seeing critical levels of misalignment between brands and people. That fact needs to push us to think differently.

THE IRL DEFICIT

The in-real-life (IRL) deficit is real. If we start to add up the evidence, it tells a story about misalignment between companies and people – everyone from the average person on the street to their own employee:

- › In pointing out how out of sync company investment priorities are when compared to people's desires, Accenture's *The Human Paradox* report warns that companies need to stop seeing people as "walking wallets" and identifies a "crisis of relevance" for companies across categories.
- › Leo Burnett's *The HumanKind Study* demonstrates how much room exists for companies to step up and solve real human problems, concluding that consumers don't think brands understand their problems.
- › Gallup's new book, *Blindspot*, discusses how leaders missed the rise in global unhappiness and related phenomena like "the great resignation" and hyperbolic concepts like "quiet quitting."

While this might seem like new phenomenon, it isn't. The cracks are just more evident now. Alignment is only becoming more critical as people start to shift their consumption attitudes and behaviours, deal with competing priorities and raise expectations for companies and brands.

“Right now, we’re seeing critical levels of misalignment between brands and people. That fact needs to push us to think differently.”

IRL is getting more attention as digital integrates more invisibly with our physical world. Brands like Patagonia stand out for their investment in the physical world. Digital media is learning to be more sustainable.

WARC predicts IRL channels, like out of home and cinema, to grow over the next few years, while the home remains critical to the customer journey. According to IAB Canada, audio media is growing at record rates, smart devices have higher market penetration here than in the United States, while shopping local and in store hold their own against e-commerce. We are truly a country that embraces technology while also valuing our real-life experiences.

As an industry, we have access to lots of IRL examples of brands getting alignment right and the proof that when brands get behind people, people get behind them. Strategically, figuring out how to align with consumers – in real life – should be a priority for making investments pay toward marketing resilience.

A VULNERABLE POSITION

Recessionary rumblings inevitably bring with them questions of cutting marketing spend and a flood of evidence-based content telling marketers why they shouldn't cut spend.

Evidence from past recessions shows that companies that maintained or grew ad spend generated higher growth. Also, where that investment is put matters. Investing in brand, reinforcing value proposition, and emotional messaging performed better over promotional, rational ads. In 2020, brand strategy took the number-one spot as a vital capability among CMOs, according to Gartner.

Canada was the hardest-hit and slowest-to-recover ad economy among English-speaking markets coming out of COVID, according to

Standard Media Index analysis. When they did build back ad spend, according to the study, Canadian companies were even more deeply invested in digital media than they had been before COVID – more so than other markets, despite almost identical digital consumption habits. This overinvestment in digital illustrates the pressures on budgets in Canada influencing decision making.

Although this isn't recessionary data, it does provide an indication of the seemingly vulnerable position of marketing in Canada and the reactionary behaviour of organizations when disruption hits.

There are uncomfortable implications here:

1. Marketing is discretionary in seeing companies through hard times.
2. Connecting with people or building brands or future value aren't the job of marketing.

What happens if uncertainty, change and disruption become the status quo? If we think about it this way, then we move beyond questions of cutting spend and toward the vital role of marketing in creating business reliance.

Canada has a unique set of conditions that make it particularly vulnerable to costs. Under these conditions, it's imperative for marketers to move beyond questions of spending to focus on questions of marketing resilience and creating greater alignment with people.

CREATING ALIGNMENT

Right now, we live in a world of contradictions and can only move forward when we take the time to understand the tensions hiding inside consumer behaviours, socio-technological changes and cultural trends – all important for navigating uncertainty and change.

Consumer value resides in tuning in to scarcity. To align with consumers, marketers need to understand what scarcity means to their lives in relation to category and brand-value proposition within a Canadian context. Inflation reduces affordability, so brands that can find sensitive ways to create affordability are appreciated. During hard market conditions they can be a source of trust and value. Consumers are dealing with inflation while also hearing about company record profits, which has a negative impact on customer sentiment. It's important to note that attention, relevance and trust have been scarce for some time.

Most creative briefs are focused on what we want consumers to do – it's about what's in it for us. While this is part of business, we need to ensure we offer solutions from a "what's in it for them" perspective. The ideas that win are ones that understand customers become more valuable when you do something, not when they do something.

Often when we talk about the customer journey, it's very transactional. We treat it as synonymous with a path to purchase. Yet a customer journey should be designed around people – not channels, technology or the purchase. The customer journey is just a mapping tool to increase understanding. It should therefore be designed to create value and distinction in brand experience, acting as a source for emotional connection and innovation, not just removing pain points.

If you spend a lot of time looking at the competition, take an eye off them. Comp-

“The brands that prove successful and valuable to people are turning disruption into a wave to ride forward by putting human experience first.”

etition in industry terms is an increasingly unstable construct. Columbia Business School professor Rita McGrath says:

“Thinking your competition is within your own industry creates major blind spots. Today, a brand's major opportunities and existential threats are less likely to come from the usual suspects at the heart of their industries than from what's about to happen on the fringes.”

According to Interbrand, this shifting context means the strategic focus needs to reorient to a competitive landscape that is grounded in consumers' evolving expectations, not industry norms.

Take one day a week, or allocate a percentage of time to just talk. Not a meeting, workshop or brainstorm – a real conversation. Get away from the acronyms, the checklists, the agendas and the busyness and just have conversations that are business opposite.

REMAINING RELEVANT

A renewed focus on the role and value of marketing is a critical step toward aligning with consumers, contributing to business resilience and getting past myopic and reactionary questions about budget cuts and efficiencies. Without that, it's harder to get past short-term reactions and meaningfully respond to change.

The modern marketing dilemma is a catch-22 – one pitting thoughtfulness against action. Everyone wants predictable results at the speed of right now, but speed requires more vision, context, understanding, expertise and discipline. Short-term strategies and reactions lead to IRL marketing challenges related to growth, relevance, brand health and marketing effectiveness.

Big or small, global or local, small acts or game-changing moves, the brands that prove successful and valuable to people are turning disruption into a wave to ride forward by putting human experience first. When you align with consumers, you create resilience.

Using marketing to navigate disruption will take a renewed focus on understanding the people you are marketing to and making them part of your brand. This way, you are riding that wave forward together. And that's what marketing is – a meaningful way to always be relevant.

FINDING MARKETING FOCUS

Looking to sharpen up your marketing focus in the year ahead? Look to these reliable concepts summarized from *INCITE 2022* to get you more closely aligned with consumers.

BRAND RESILIENCE FACTORS

Recently, Patagonia made the environment its only shareholder. While many brands aren't in a position to make that sort of move, the best and brightest global brands can tell us a lot about what resilience looks like. The Interbrand *Best Global Brands 2021* report found that top risers in the rankings shared strong performance on three brand strength factors:

DIRECTION

Direction helps brands move with agility.

These brands set a clear path, ensuring that the entire organization knows where they are going and is working toward the same ambition.

AGILITY

Agility helps brands turn direction into opportunity.

These brands move fast, bringing new products and services to market and, where necessary, pivoting to address changing customer needs.

PARTICIPATION

Participation solidifies opportunity through relevance and engagement.

These brands ultimately bring people on a journey with them and make them part of the movement to create an engaging brand world.

Look at what integration gaps are costing you. Fragmentation. Complexity. Increased interdependencies. Integration of more people, functions, messages and formats across channels within customer journeys meets these challenges by ensuring data and technology work together and that marketing and customer experience are aligned – all on a smaller budget and shorter timeline.

Integration is simply about bringing things together to function in better or new ways. Think about how brand, customer experience, functional departments, data, technology, creative, channel and measurement can work better together to close vital integration gaps.

Look to proximity to get closer to people. One-to-one (1:1) commerce is ushering in a more diverse, connected and mixed-reality landscape that won't be defined by the traditional scroll-and-click e-commerce experience or digital-only channels. Not simply another term for direct, 1:1 commerce is organized around proximity. Proximity is about our personal relationships to time and space, each other and our environment.

From retail media networks, text and voice-activated devices to social media and direct mail, media is getting more intimate. Our homes, for example, are becoming an integral part of the DTC customer journey due to their proximity to decision making, shopping and brand interaction. It's an influential environment for marketing, a place to fill in or extend customer experience and the threshold where anticipation meets fulfillment. The majority of products we buy will be experienced at home. Yet many

brands haven't taken the time to map the role of the home in the customer journey. The cadence of home gives us space to think, feel and be – offering powerful points of connection.

Proximity is an opportunity to get closer to people, close transaction gaps and create better customer engagement that not only converts but captivates.

Look at how respect reorients data capture. DTC strategies don't guarantee a captive audience. People are showing they can shut the door on brands any time they want. Truly customer-centric brands are proving that data capture is a natural consequence of how they engage with people. Beyond transactional, they are focused on building first-party relationships.

The closer commerce comes to our intimate lives and our data, the greater the need for respect. As we emphasize first-party data (i.e., physical, digital, biological), brands and consumers alike should find a lot of upsides. But to capitalize on those upsides, the vocabulary of data needs to become customer-centric: privacy, security, consent, transparency, value, relevance.

That shift starts with respect. Third-party cookie deprecation has created a first-party data imperative. Yet, advertising trust has been compromised for a number of years. Nearly three quarters (72%) of consumers would stop buying from a company or using a service because of privacy concerns, according to Salesforce. As many as 80% of customers have tried new channels, brands, stores and products since 2020, according to McKinsey. There's a lot at stake.

Look at what identity means to value creation. As the industry looks to replace third-party identifiers, two things are clear: 1) We're not trying to reinvent them. 2) There won't be a single solution. The question marketers need to focus on isn't about what's replacing third-party cookies; it's about what identity means to consumer value creation – which is about people, not identifiers.

People's identities are multidimensional; they express themselves contextually, across physical and digital spaces. How people choose what media and content they consume, the communities they participate in and the brands and products they buy is based on identity. Our identity is connecting to objects and environments in the physical world. Intelligent devices are learning to identify with us – our preferences, habits and moods. Thermostats have the sensitivity to read the room. Alexa is conversing with us. Google Assistant just wants to help. Technology brings our digital identities to bear on the physical environments we inhabit.

Context, communities, interests and self-expression are emerging as a focus for brands that want to connect and grow. As we orient ourselves toward identity, we need to take stock of what we do and don't know about how identity expresses itself in everyday life – particularly coming out of the pandemic, which continues to have a reorienting effect on consumer priorities. ■

Read More >>

Go to canadapost.ca/incite to download these articles from our archive for more on how to navigate a changing marketing landscape.



INCITE 2022 03
Connecting to Identity



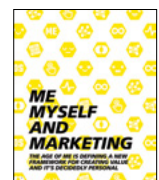
INCITE 2022 02
One-to-One Commerce



INCITE 2021 03
Media Rethink



INCITE 2021 01
Unlocking Sustainability



INCITE 2019 02
Me, Myself and Marketing



Scan now
to listen to
this article.



CULTURAL DISRUPTORS

By Shawn Kanungo

Beyond business and technology, their stories of disruption can help you find success within universes of your own creation.

Let me introduce you to a new breed of disruptors.

This category of disruptors writes their own rules. They build their own universes.

For decades, our society has been obsessed with one type of disruptors: the technological disruptors. There are thousands of stories written about companies like Stripe, Uber, Netflix and Airbnb. But, if we pull back the curtains on history, disruption isn't just about business, and it certainly doesn't only come through technology.

Disruption is about an upheaval of the status quo, wherever it exists:

- › Shakespeare disrupted the arts by bringing the elites and the masses together through stories.
- › Henry Ford disrupted the process of industrialization with the assembly line.
- › Mahatma Gandhi disrupted colonialism by fighting it with peaceful methods.

Today, the most iconic disruptors are cultural disruptors – individuals or brands who can implant themselves so deep into the hearts and minds of a community that their next move, however audacious, changes how we view social norms, political balances of power and even life itself.

Cultural disruptors will outlast the technologies they invent and the powers they fight. Their advantage is that they have built a deep connection with their customers and community. Today, some of the best brands – from Gymshark and Glossier to SKIMS and the Bored Ape Yacht Club – have created their own universes in creative ways.

TURNING FANS INTO YOUR STORYTELLERS

One of the ways these disruptors build their own universes is by enabling their fans to create their own stories.

From superhero comics to *Cinderella*, from the origins of the universe to the *Origin of Species*, from *Batman* to *Band of Brothers*, stories become the iconic ideas that inspire, unite and rally humanity. The

“If we want a lasting legacy in this world, we must create a story that captures others’ imaginations but also simultaneously inspires them to create their own stories inside of ours.”

greatest stories don't just provide the needed inspiration but also offer a touchstone, a point from which people can add to create their own story inside your universe.

Consider the most successful game creators, comic book writers, media companies, NFT projects and authors. They all create a macrocosm so large, they have room for not only their own stories but also the stories of others:

- › *Dungeons & Dragons* is an entire world of gameplay that encourages the individual players to build their own characters. *D&D* created the platform; others leap from it.
- › SHEIN encourages its fans to film their “SHEIN hauls” on TikTok and YouTube to showcase their latest fashion finds.
- › Comic book creators design such detailed and expansive characters, places and powers that dozens of writers, artists, actors and directors can keep adding, expanding and recreating for decades.
- › Writers such as J.K. Rowling, J.R.R. Tolkien and George Lucas develop such captivating stories that there's a whole genre of work called “fanfiction” that invites others to create.
- › The NFT project Bored Ape Yacht Club allowed its members to have unlimited commercial rights, incentivizing them to create derivative works using its brand.

These entities demonstrate that if we want to create something truly culturally disruptive – such as a new product, a revolutionized platform or a creative method of accomplishing an outcome – then we're eventually going to need a dedicated following – a devout group of individuals who turn into fans, evangelists and partners.

Salesforce, whose flagship product is a customer relationship management tool, has created its own universe. Its software platform is so extensive that numerous third-party businesses offer Salesforce add-ons.

Every year, Salesforce hosts its Dreamforce conference, bringing together hundreds of companies and over 170,000 people. It's like comic-con – but for a sales software platform. Salesforce has created a universe so large, it's a breeding ground for others.

If we want a lasting legacy in this world, we must create a story that captures others' imaginations but also simultaneously inspires them to create their own stories inside of ours.

Whether you're creating a new video, podcast, product or service, people need to know why this matters to you. Choose a story and go for it. It doesn't need to be made up – in fact, it needs to be *real*, in their face. The truer the better; the rarer the better; and the more clearly you can paint the battle lines, all the better.

People will buy in when the story pricks their imaginations.

If you want to know how to create a story, read a book on Greek gods and goddesses, or check out the *Star Wars* series, and apply what you're learning to the tale you're trying to tell.

BUILD SOMETHING MORE VIRAL THAN A PRODUCT

To basketball fans born before the 1990s, the name Michael Jordan is synonymous with “the greatest basketball player of all time.” But when my nephews, born after 2000, think of Michael Jordan, they look down at their feet at their Air Jordans.

To them, Michael Jordan is the shoe guy.

“In the best way possible, innovation is a contagious, dangerous game. And like any infectious organism, it spreads in proximity.”

If I asked them about him, they'd have some vague recollection that he played basketball. They'd probably note that “a lot of people think he was really good.”

They may never have seen him play, but they're still wearing his shoes. MJ trans-figured from the GOAT (greatest of all time) of the court to footwear. He's successfully outlived his youthful days, and yet people are still paying gobs of cash to get his silhouette on their Nikes.

MJ built something more viral than his product: his basketball abilities. Now his shoes are long outlasting his days on the court.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH OTHER INNOVATORS

If you want to inspire cultural disruption, eventually you'll need help from those around you. I like to tell my team, “*Never show up to a battle without an army.*”

In his book *Wanting*, author Luke Burgis talks about mimetic desire, a concept originally developed by French philosopher and polymath René Girard. Burgis and Girard both posit that our innermost desires often aren't ours at all, but that we're simply mimicking the desires of others.

We want the Ferrari because Joe wants it.

We want the scholarship because Angela has it.

I've watched as my son picks up a previously discarded truck, lying on the floor near a group of other children. Suddenly, that truck is the object of every child's desire.

If you apply this to how to disrupt a culture, you'll find a huge upside: Once you start innovating, you'll ignite the innovation desires of others. They see how the marketplace

rewarded you, how the industry recognized you, and they want the same. This is the kind of innovation fire you need to start, be a part of and fan if you want to truly be a cultural disruptor.

In the best way possible, innovation is a contagious, dangerous game. And like any infectious organism, it spreads in proximity.

That's one reason Silicon Valley pumps out so many awe-inspiring technologies – the valley is a hub of innovative tech, and it just keeps attracting more innovators like a magnet.

You can also look at Russell Simmons's groundbreaking TV show, *Def Comedy Jam*. When he put together Black comedians from across the country to challenge and excite each other, a who's-who of the world's greatest comedians emerged: Martin Lawrence, Chris Tucker, Chris Rock, Dave Chappelle.

If you put our mimetic desires in a room with other innovators, the results are contagious, as we each challenge and inspire the best in each other.

Cultural disruptors don't wait for permission, for anyone to invite them. They take their place at the table, or they build their own. They find a way in, or way around. Along the way, they inspire others; they infect the marketplace with new methods, new systems and new products. They discover, create, fail, repeat.

The world doesn't make room for cultural disruptors and their ideas; they reshape the world as needed. They empower their fans to build stories, to build ideas more viral than their product and ultimately to work with others to fuel their own legacy.

It's time to jump, to make a bold move – one that requires taking a chance. Put some skin in the game, and make a little noise. When you do, you'll likely find others who've been thinking the same things all along. When you do ruffle some feathers – and you will – just remember what Oscar Wilde said:

“*An idea that is not dangerous is unworthy of being called an idea at all.*” ■

Shawn Kanungo is a globally recognized innovation strategist working at the intersection of creativity, business and technology. He previously spent 12 years at Deloitte working with leaders to plan for the opportunities associated with disruptive innovation. This is an edited excerpt of his debut book, *The Bold Ones*, available now from McGraw-Hill.



MAPPING THE FUTURE

By Sean Moffitt

Visualizing the six paths from the veil of uncertainty to the quest of foresight.

What will the future look like? Anybody who has put stock in the 14-day weather forecast knows playing with the future can be tricky business. But we still do it. Navigating the future is a distinctly human endeavour, both fascinating as a discipline and confounding due to its mercurial nature.

It's even tougher now. In fact, a new era requires a new term to define the deeper, almost structural disorder we face. We call it a super-CAFFEINATED world – standing for Complex, Ambiguous, Faster, Fragmented, Erratic, Interconnected, Needs-driven, Anxious, Tech-enabled, Exponential and Disruptive.

The last 30 months of a global pandemic provides a more-than-convenient back-drop to a super-CAFFEINATED world. Our updated mental model underscores two evolving perspectives:

The future is complicated. In our sped-up world, we are drowning in data, still blindsided by behavioural and human movements and accelerated by technology and globalization forces. What can make this chaos easier to understand? What can reliably process the right signals and turn them into meaningful outcomes? How do we minimize the surprise of a barely imaginable future?

The future is something we can determine. We are not just married to one fateful journey or imprisoned by the causal chains of the past. These scenarios emerge from a confluence of factors, some of which are in our control. How can we spot the future opportunities from the red herrings? How do we take advantage of the arbitrage between the past known and the future unknown? How do we backcast from the future to decide what actions to take now?

To answer these questions? **Mapping.**

NEW AGE OF DISCOVERY

During the first Age of Discovery (c. 1400-1600), European nations set sail across the world in search of riches and knowledge. Cartography exploded – a significant portion of the yet-unknown world was mapped during this relatively short period. Advances were made in how we could visualize the previously unknown.

There is a new set of zealous explorers who are now mapping the frontiers of a very different world – the near, mid and far futures. They are the technologists, futurists and sense makers among us.

My collective, Grey Swan Guild, and its consultancy spinoff, Cygnus Sprints, make sense of these existential challenges as a driving motivation. Incredible knowledge and riches are once again trapped behind making new discoveries about our world moving forward. The different challenge in this new age is navigating not only space and events, but also time and uncertainty.

“Map out your future – but do it in pencil.”
– Jon Bon Jovi

With the same spirit of those intrepid navigators, let's explore the routes our new cartographers of the future are searching for. Before embarking on this journey, however, let's gear up and remind ourselves that the best maps of the future

- 1) are revelatory in unlocking new wisdom;
- 2) animate key foresights and implications;
- 3) visualize complexity through pattern and imagery;
- 4) contextualize through visual metaphors;
- 5) save time and energy for both sender and receiver;
- 6) are educational, profiling the full landscape and/or paths available;
- 7) empower users and actors, particularly when interactive;
- 8) are powerful in stimulating users' imaginations via aesthetics and multimedia;
- 9) are credible breadcrumbs (especially when providing underlying data or inputs); and
- 10) tell stories that stick to memory and trigger action.

Using maps and visualizations, a new futures atlas is being developed that can

positively inform decisions and policies in business, education, science, technology and government. Stakeholders can now better plan for the fast-approaching future.

These maps don't provide just one type of future rendering; they serve six different functions. This new futures atlas provides a captain's perch from which to view the future, offering up six paths to help you anticipate, explore, consider, act on, socialize and quantify it.

The Atlas of the future chart that follows on the next page provides a brief overview of each of the six paths and their corresponding benefits and visualization techniques. ■

Sean Moffitt navigates the future as founder of the Grey Swan Guild, a global collective making sense of the world's biggest challenges and future wild cards, and Managing Director of Cygnus Sprints, an on-demand consulting and advisory group designed for a complex, sped-up world.

ATLAS OF THE FUTURE

MAPPING PATH	MAPPING TECHNIQUES
<p>EXPLORING THE FUTURE Unmasking the full breadth and depth of possible futures.</p> <p>Benefits: Creating a portfolio of possibilities and diversity of influences that reveal blind spots and challenge status-quo thinking.</p>	<p>Future landscapes are panoramic graphical guides to the categories, key forces and integral elements swaying future developments.</p> <p>Axes of uncertainty detail four scenarios describing alternative narratives based on two key uncertainties.</p> <p>Futures triangle allocates importance to three key vectors of forces – the weight of the past, the push of the present and the pull of the future.</p> <p>Futures wheel reflects the interconnected potential effect of a change, idea or trend and the consequences that may emerge.</p> <p>Futures cone moves forward from the present to a range of alternative futures from probable, possible and plausible to preferable futures.</p>
<p>SHARING THE FUTURE Socializing ideas of new futures into the minds of the people who need them so they can clearly see, believe, embrace and act on them.</p> <p>Benefits: Cutting through the clutter, simplifying a complex world and telling stories that stick.</p>	<p>Dynamic calculators take input from respondents about future conditions and use this data and insight to generate personalized numerical results or specific outcomes.</p> <p>Future radars create time-based views of future opportunities (e.g., emerging technologies, market changes, regulatory developments and business models) ranked by impact.</p> <p>Immersive experiences use sensory media that envelop people in an unfamiliar setting or convey a complex idea.</p> <p>Pre-mortems identify top project outcomes, roadblocks and risks before they happen and ways to mitigate them.</p> <p>Infographics harness strong aesthetic design and data to help people retain information.</p>
<p>REACTING TO THE FUTURE Provoking actions, implications, steps and a range of potential reactions.</p> <p>Benefits: Promoting agility, painting favourable decision paths, highlighting opportunities, clarifying smarter directions and steering resources.</p>	<p>Decision trees diagram future alternative decisions, decision forks and their associated probabilities and outcomes.</p> <p>Gaming simulations pre-test real-world phenomena for expected human action and behavioural assumptions in decision models prior to implementation.</p> <p>Causal layered analysis evaluates four levels of influence: current conditions, systemic causes, cultural world views and values, and myths and metaphors at play.</p> <p>Wind tunnelling stress tests how a system would behave under real and hypothetical adverse conditions – identifying critical planning points, options and contingencies.</p> <p>Blue oceans find new market spaces of low competition and new demand to develop.</p>
<p>ANTICIPATING THE FUTURE Looking ahead to foreseeable, preventable and desirable future conditions, events, dependencies and ways of being.</p> <p>Benefits: Envisioning a preferred future, facilitating pre-emptive adjustments, harnessing first-mover advantages, positioning to lead the field and building decision confidence.</p>	<p>Backcasting links back from a range of aspirational future end states to the present by a set of favourable events, actions, policies and programs.</p> <p>Driver mapping clusters related inputs and key trends that support probable future directions.</p> <p>Cross-impact analysis establishes links between events and shows the interactions, probabilities and impact of essential factors.</p> <p>Tech maturation life cycles estimate the maturity of technologies and readiness to impact, from conception to maturity to widespread adoption.</p> <p>VRIO analysis focuses on evaluating an organization's future resources and capabilities in a business analysis framework.</p>
<p>CONSIDERING THE FUTURE Contemplating and speculating on different futures and what long-term considerations, impacts and risks must be looked at and played out.</p> <p>Benefits: Unlocking mindsets, establishing new paradigms, making the future tangible and introducing new perspectives and paths.</p>	<p>Artifacts of the future help us translate today's trends and signals into intimate future experiences through familiar objects of everyday life.</p> <p>Time-lapse modelling illustrates a sequence of data points over an interval of future time, detecting changes, mapping trends and quantifying differences.</p> <p>Future story archetypes, card-based narratives frequently classified into four recurring stories of change: continuation, limits and discipline, decline and collapse, and transformation.</p> <p>Speculative design removes current limitations of technology, culture and politics as a catalyst for collectively redefining our relationship to reality.</p> <p>Speculative fiction creates supernatural, futuristic and imaginative fiction and story arcs, containing elements that don't exist in reality, history, nature or the present universe.</p>
<p>QUANTIFYING THE FUTURE Measuring the amplitude and direction of impacts, actions or reactions and satisfying our needs for certainty, rigour and discipline.</p> <p>Benefits: Forecasting impacts, predicting likelihoods, reducing uncertainty and establishing causal evidence and repeatable performance.</p>	<p>Factor analysis reduces the number of variables by clustering them into small sets of relatable groups or key factors.</p> <p>Delphi method uses multiple rounds of questionnaires to estimate the likelihood and outcome of futures, aiding decisions, policies and trend detection.</p> <p>Time series analyzes baselines, trends, cycles and seasonality using statistical modelling to forecast predictions and strategic decisions.</p> <p>Regression analysis statistically models linear or non-linear variables and data, used to interpolate or extrapolate futures.</p> <p>Digital twins create virtual models to simulate an object or system, updated from real-time data, to help decision making.</p>

PLAYING MIND GAMES

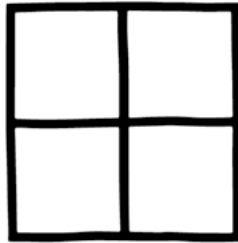
When it comes to seeing challenges and opportunities in new ways, there are countless methods, models and frameworks to help shape your thinking. But which one works best for your business? While that answer is as unique as your goals, the correct tool is always the one that structures information in ways to offer more

clarity, more understanding and less bias – meaning you have the insights necessary to take action and unlock value for consumers and your company. Ready to see things a bit differently? Here are some of our strategic-thinking favourites.



FLYWHEEL

Put customers at the centre, unite brand and business and get everything moving in the same direction. This looped model creates a virtuous cycle between brand, offerings and audience by emphasizing engagement and treating customers as participants.



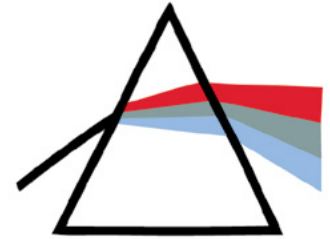
JOHARI WINDOW

Get at what you know, don't know and assume. This quadrant-based tool looks at the big picture, sees alternatives related to uncertainties and identifies weak signals, emerging scenarios and blind spots.



CONNECTED CIRCLES

Draw a circle and play a game of connect the dots to visualize the relationships between things and identify feedback loops within systems. This ecosystem tool helps you see complexity, find the interrelationships that matter for influencing outcomes and design better customer experience.



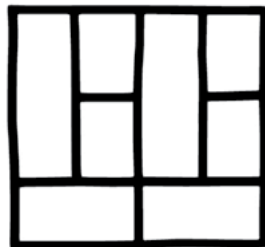
INNOVATION SPECTRUM

Shake up what you spend time and resources on. This tool shifts the status quo, ensuring your activities will achieve your goals by plotting them along a spectrum from “do the same” to “do differently” to “do new.”



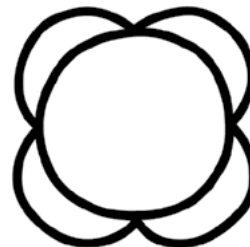
MINDSETS

Capture the full spectrum of people who could find value in your brand. This model is taking over from personas (which tend to represent an average user in superficial terms) by creating a more dynamic and actionable approach to understanding audience intent and context.



BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS

Operationalize strategic concepts connecting brand, business and CX. This strategic management tool documents, defines, adapts and innovates your business model(s) across nine areas to influence the brand ecosystem and value chain.



4-P MODEL

Embrace a holistic approach to understanding how macro-drivers and trends link to human expectations and behaviours. This foresight framework is based on the 4-P bottom line: purpose, people, planet and profit.



SPRINTING

Work through challenges collaboratively – and quickly – using design methods, expert inputs and facilitation. This method speeds up market impact without sacrificing thinking, while also spurring open dialogue, diversity and co-creation among stakeholders.

CASE STUDY

Dr. Green turns data visualization into strategic targeting to sow the seeds of customer acquisition and retention.

GROWING OPPORTUNITIES

Founded in 1985, Dr. Green is a family-run lawn care services company operating in Ontario, Alberta and the United States. The company's primary focus is on residential lawn health, including seeding and weed-control services.

Lawn care is a competitive market no matter where you operate. In Canada, Dr. Green faces dozens of competitors, from family-owned local companies to national and international franchises. As prices and services are relatively similar across all competitors, success is determined by who can develop the best marketing strategy and deliver top customer service.

CHALLENGE

Lawn care has a clear annual cycle in Canada, so acquisition and retention of customers happen within a narrow window of six weeks at the start of the year. In Ontario, for instance, three quarters of Dr. Green's new annually generated revenue comes in February, March and April.

That means Dr. Green needed to make every dollar spent on marketing count.

Over the years, the company tried a number of solutions, from newspaper ads and inserts to door-to-door solicitations. The results were mixed, as affordable solutions were unsuccessful and effective solutions were too expensive. Even with direct mail, the company's early efforts were unfocused.

Dr. Green turned to Canada Post to more efficiently cultivate customers and sow the seeds of success.

RELEVANCE

Marketers understand the seemingly constant challenges of acquisition and retention,



a pressure particularly felt among seasonal industries, where ebbs and flows are more extreme. When working within a narrow timeframe, the pressure is on – there can be no waste.

Targeting tools offer geographic, demographic and lifestyle data that help marketers locate their best prospects. Visualizing that data lets decision makers see the insights needed to make confident, data-driven decisions about targeting criteria that will meet business objectives.

Effective targeting is the key to making direct mail work smarter to get messages into the right hands.

INCITING ACTION

Dr. Green embraced Canada Post Neighbourhood Mail and Personalized Mail from the start.

The company was already sending direct mail to 300,000 homes in Alberta with the goal of hitting every home three times within its seasonal sales window.

To succeed with that kind of volume, however, Dr. Green had to be strategic. Precision

Targeter helped the company get to the root of its potential customers. Knowing what its best customers looked like, the company filtered for income (seeking households making \$80,000 or more), homeowners over renters and detached or semi-detached homes.

“My ‘aha!’ moment with Precision Targeter came when I saw how demographic data and geolocation identified our best potential customers right down to the root level of some of the awesome postal codes we have,” said Lee Ratcliffe, owner/operator of Dr. Green in Alberta.

Dr. Green used Canada Post's data visualization tool, which provides a visual representation of data like geographical insights and patterns, to evaluate each mailing and optimize targeting based on the best opportunity to grow its customer base.

Canada Post made other suggestions, as well, like using Personalized Mail to encourage previous customers to sign up for the upcoming year and incorporating QR codes into the marketing creative, driving to Dr. Green's get-a-quote tool.



RESULTS

In 2020, Dr. Green saw 30% sales growth in Calgary and 15% sales growth in Edmonton thanks to Precision Targeter. In 2021, the company adjusted its campaign using Canada Post's new data visualization tool and saw further growth: 30% in Edmonton and 20% in Calgary.

That year, Dr. Green also added two extra campaign mailings in four top-performing postal codes (two each in Calgary and Edmonton). Those became the company's most productive postal codes. They look to expand that number to six postal codes.

While Precision Targeter and visualization pointed the way to success, the addition of a QR code to the direct mail creative helped people take action and sped up conversion.

In 2021, the direct mail with the QR code pointing to the get-an-estimate tool became the company's top online lead generator – over 2,000 scans leading to 700 sales and \$200,000 in revenue.

Dr. Green was so happy with the omni-channel activation of the QR code that, to generate even more digital leads from

physical, it was added to the sides and tailgates of their vehicle fleet this spring.

"All of this data insight is something that we've never really been able to see before. It has proved to us that our old way wasn't going to work – and we need to do what works. Working with Canada Post has helped us understand the opportunities we have available to us," Ratcliffe said.

Case Study Debrief

BRAND Dr. Green Lawn Care Services **INDUSTRY** Services

INCITING ACTION

Dr. Green used a combination of data-visualization-informed targeting and evaluation, QR codes and optimization to improve direct mail marketing effectiveness.

RESULTS

The direct mail campaign generated 15-30% sales growth during a six-week seasonal marketing window.

CONVERSION FUNNEL

Dots indicate how direct mail was used to incite action.



DATA SOURCES

First party; Precision Targeter; visualization tool

PRODUCT

Neighbourhood Mail; Personalized Mail

ACTIVATION PILLARS

- Physicality
- Data
- Connectivity

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- › The right targeting has a big impact on marketing effectiveness.
- › Data visualization reveals new insights and opportunities.
- › Physical media can generate strong digital leads.
- › Connected media speeds up conversion.

“ All of this data insight is something that we've never really been able to see before. It has proved to us that our old way wasn't going to work – and we need to do what works. Working with Canada Post has helped us understand the opportunities we have available to us. ”

– Lee Ratcliffe, owner/operator of Dr. Green in Alberta



Why should you visit *INCITE* Online?



DEEPEN YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Subscribe to *INCITE* and access past editions of Canada's top marketing ideas magazine



EXPAND YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Read online-exclusive content written for, by, and about marketers



DISCOVER WHAT WORKS

See how brands combine media, data and creativity in our collection of real-world case studies



DON'T MISS OUT

Stay up to date on the latest events and newest resources designed for marketing professionals



canadapost.ca/incite



Smartmail Marketing™

CASE STORIES

A collection of global work from across industries showcasing how modern marketers are using direct mail media to get closer to their customers.

Get inspired >>
*Scan here for more
INCITE direct mail cases
from our digital archive.*



CATCHING FIRE

Campaign fans flames among social influencers.

Frito-Lay had a burning desire to launch its Flamin' Hot Doritos in Brazil. The company had no doubt the product, already a hit around the world, would catch fire with consumers in the South American country.

But buyer beware! The Flamin' Hot flavour was way spicier than any other flavour Elma Chips (the Brazilian Frito-Lay subsidiary) offered in the country. Not only did Frito-Lay need to hype up the product's arrival, but they needed to warn Brazilians about its heightened spiciness.

To do so, Frito-Lay thought big – by thinking small – and created the smallest bag it had ever manufactured, containing just 0.1 ounces of product. They then mailed the bag to hundreds of social media influencers with a warning:

“DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THIS BAG.”

The digital amplification that followed the spicy direct mail piece was a tasty treat. Over the course of only one week, the influencers posted videos about the spicy arrival, racking up more than 139.7 million impressions and 167,000 interactions.

It was a campaign that proved big ideas can come in small packages.



COMPANY: PepsiCo | PRODUCT: Chips | COUNTRY: Brazil | AGENCY: AlmapBBDO

DEALING WITH REJECTION

Near-perfect brews cure what “ales” brand.

Despite Matilda Bay’s award-winning Original Ale circulating in the craft beer market for a year, sales and retail distribution were stale. But instead of crying in its beer, the company embraced its customer rejection by launching Rejected Ales.

This limited-edition collection of 27 “near-perfect brews” were created from formulas rejected by the in-house brewmaster on the way to crafting the award-winning Original Ale. But rather than keep these almost-perfects a secret, the brewery made them available to the public to prove just how good their Original Ale is.

The Original and Rejected Ales were sent to media members and beer influencers in custom packs before being distributed in stores, allowing the rest of Australia to discover the journey to perfection. With names like “Yeah... nah,” “Keep dreaming” and “Ballpark,” all 27 Rejected Ale cans told a story of their particular rejection. The campaign was also supported by press ads, street posters, radio and online ads.

Turns out people don’t mind raising a pint to failure. Original Ale sales skyrocketed 11-fold thanks to a direct mail campaign that inspired a 17% increase in the brand’s appearance on store shelves and 14 million media impressions in the first two weeks.

If at first you don’t succeed, brew, brew again.



COMPANY: Matilda Bay | PRODUCT: Beer | COUNTRY: Australia | AGENCY: Howatson+Company

FEEDING THE MIND

Supermarket uses catalogue to speak a new language.

Colombia boasts a rich language tradition, from its official tongue, Spanish, to more than 60 Indigenous languages. But as a country, Colombia trails much of the rest of the world in English-language proficiency.

In South America, a strong command of English translates directly into greater economic opportunity. On average, high-proficiency countries also live longer, have better access to health care and are more connected to the internet. Learning to speak the language, however, can be expensive and out of reach for the average cost-conscious Colombian.

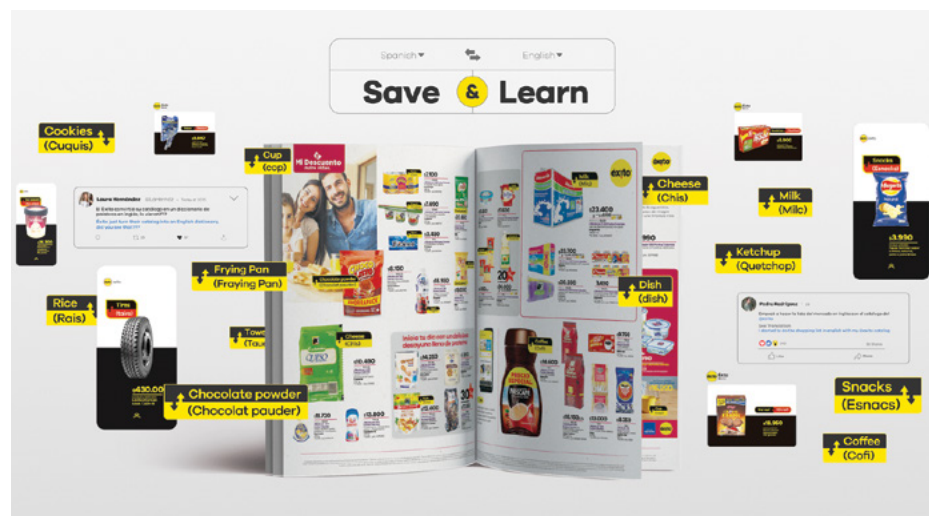
Almacenes Éxito wondered if it could help.

For years, the country's largest supermarket chain communicated its deals to shoppers through regular catalogues. These print products had enormous influence and scope – 140,000 catalogues and four million pages printed monthly, distributed across 63 cities.

So when Almacenes Éxito turned its promotional catalogues into its customers' first free basic English lesson, it was an exciting moment for families across the country.

In each edition, the supermarket chain translated the names of more than 300 products, offering almost 4,000 new English words to learn and exercises to reinforce. While shoppers saved money, they also learned a valuable new language.

The company not only drove interest in its brand, but it also used direct mail catalogues to drive deeper brand value and elevate customers – changing the lives of thousands.



COMPANY: Almacenes Éxito | PRODUCT: Supermarket | COUNTRY: Colombia | AGENCY: Sancho BBDO

ONE SMALL STEP

Health care provider puts employee retention on sound footing.

While 2020 marked the Year of the Nurse, the COVID-19 pandemic saw to it that there would be no time to celebrate. Instead, aged-care nurses found themselves at the forefront of a generational health care crisis, caring for nearly 800,000 of New Zealand's most vulnerable elders isolated from family and friends.

As the pandemic wore on, Oceania Healthcare knew continued employee engagement was critical, while also wanting to share more broadly the stories of the people behind the profession.

Nurses can walk more than 10,000 steps in a single shift. Therefore, the company kicked off its *In Their Shoes* initiative on International Nurses Day by mailing each of its 450 nurses a custom pair of Allbirds shoes. Inside each shoe was a message of thanks printed on the insoles.

Once on sound footing, Oceania then brought the stories of these caregivers to life across print, digital, radio and PR.

The initiative continued beyond International Nurses Day into a recruitment campaign, with each frontline nurse who joined the Oceania team receiving a pair of Allbirds.

Since the launch, this act of recognition has resulted in an unprecedented 10% decrease in staff turnover during a challenging time of severe nursing shortages.

For Oceania Healthcare, the initiative proved to be a step in the right direction.



COMPANY: Oceania Healthcare | PRODUCT: Health care | COUNTRY: New Zealand | AGENCY: YoungShand

BALLOT MEASURES

Aggressive campaign reaffirms voter confidence in mail-in balloting.

As the United States prepared for the 2020 presidential election – a race conducted amidst unprecedented partisan turmoil and a global pandemic – millions of Americans were about to vote by mail for the first time. Thanks to numerous misinformation campaigns, many Americans had doubts about the USPS's ability to deliver their ballots safely and securely.

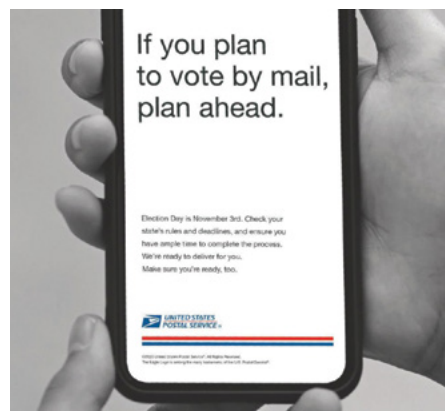
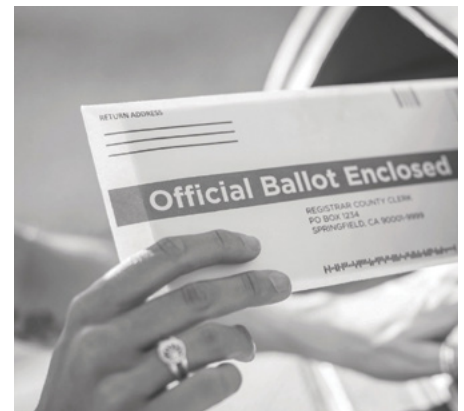
That's why USPS decided to educate Americans about the process, preventing rhetoric from becoming reality.

Launching an aggressive information campaign, USPS began with paid search and television ads in July/August 2020, both directing Americans to USPS.com/votinginfo. The biggest push, however, came from a direct mail piece delivered to 160 million mailboxes in September 2020. It was the largest single mailing in U.S. history.

The mail piece gave general instructions on how to vote by mail, written at a Grade 3 reading level, and provided the URL for more information in English and Spanish. Concurrent print, newspaper, digital display and radio ads issued the same simple call to action.

Voters responded to the messages in record numbers. The campaign generated more than 700 million impressions (330 million from the direct mail alone) and more than 1.4 million total site visits.

Perhaps more importantly, they responded at the ballot box. Among registered voters, 73% returned ballots at least one week early, 88% felt confident their vote was counted and 98% reported no trouble requesting and sending their ballots.



COMPANY: USPS | PRODUCT: Mail-in voting | COUNTRY: U.S. | AGENCY: McCann New York

BUILD BACK BETTER

Tourism push injects people, money directly into affected areas.

When small Australian communities already devastated by bushfires struggled to rebuild due to the COVID-19 pandemic stopping tourist dollars, Westpac Bank wanted to move beyond “thoughts and prayers” and live out its brand promise – “Help in the moments that matter.”

The road to recovery needed to start with getting tourist dollars back into the impacted regions. As a world-leading tourist destination, Australia’s tourism sector contributes \$152 billion to its economy, supports more than 300,000 businesses and employs more than 660,000 Australians.

With an eye toward jumpstarting that recovery, Westpac produced a series of postcards picturing infamous moments from the bushfires and mailed them to bank staff, inviting them to visit the affected regions. A debit card loaded with AUS\$150 was affixed to the front of the postcard with the intention of seeding spending in the pictured region. Using geofencing technology, the cards could only be activated in the regions featured.

As an added touch of hope, removing the debit card from the postcard further revealed a new image, now displaying a beautifully rehabilitated landscape that would one day return.

With tens of thousands of dollars distributed on these cards, the tourist impact was enormous in these smaller communities – starting a return to normal life for millions.



CASSETTE COMEBACK

Auto manufacturer tunes in to a sound idea to speak to longtime owners.

Suzuki drove customers back to the future in order to get some new models out the door.

The Suzuki Vitara is known for its endurance, so much so that the sport vehicle's owners simply don't consider moving on from them. When a car never breaks, you just keep on driving it. This is a huge advantage for car owners, but a problem when it comes to selling the new Vitara models.

So, Suzuki decided to talk to these drivers in a way (or a format) only they could understand.

After some sound brainstorming, the company created Cassettes Maps, "The first analogue GPS for cars." The throwback format could be played on the vehicle's antiquated stereo system – no CD or MP3 players here.

Cassettes were mailed to more than 1,000 Suzuki Vitara owners. Each cassette included pre-recorded personalized directions that guided owners from their homes to the nearest Suzuki car dealer where they could test drive the new Vitara. The messaging also teased new model features that might seem tempting to drivers of older vehicles.

The throwback recording didn't just sound great; it also worked, as Suzuki saw a 47% increase in test drives of the new Vitara among the previous owners.



COMPANY: Suzuki | PRODUCT: Cars | COUNTRY: Spain | AGENCY: VCCP Spain

HEAD IN THE CLOUD

Virtual assistant helps customers ask their embarrassing questions.

There are no stupid questions – only embarrassed humans reluctant to ask them.

Google knew chief technology officers had questions about its cloud services, but oftentimes shied away from asking them. So, the tech giant developed a virtual assistant to answer all things cloud related. Now, anyone with a question about the cloud could ask the Google Cloud AI (and perhaps save a bit of the embarrassment that comes with asking a real human).

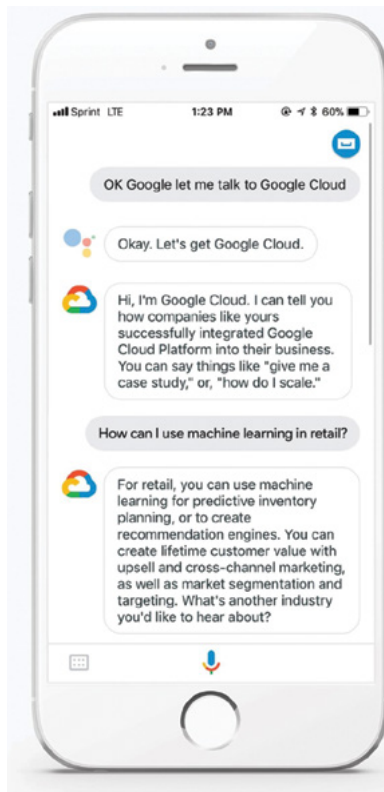
The assistant was designed to answer roughly 800 different types of questions, ranging from product explanations to industry-specific case studies to business recommendations. With each question asked, the AI learns and adapts the conversation architecture to allow for countless variations of how people can ask cloud questions and get answers.

Google then sent the assistant out in can't-miss direct mail packages to the desks of 3,750 of its top customers, offering them a customized Google Home to access its new cloud voice app.

And the conversations haven't stopped since.

In the first quarter of use, user engagement averaged 25 unique users per day, roughly 1,000 total sessions per month, at a conversation length of eight minutes each. The estimated response rate was 16% from top-tier IT executives who used the app at least once and scheduled a meeting with a Google Cloud sales representative.

Google continues to ship 3,000 to 5,000 devices per quarter to high-value prospects.

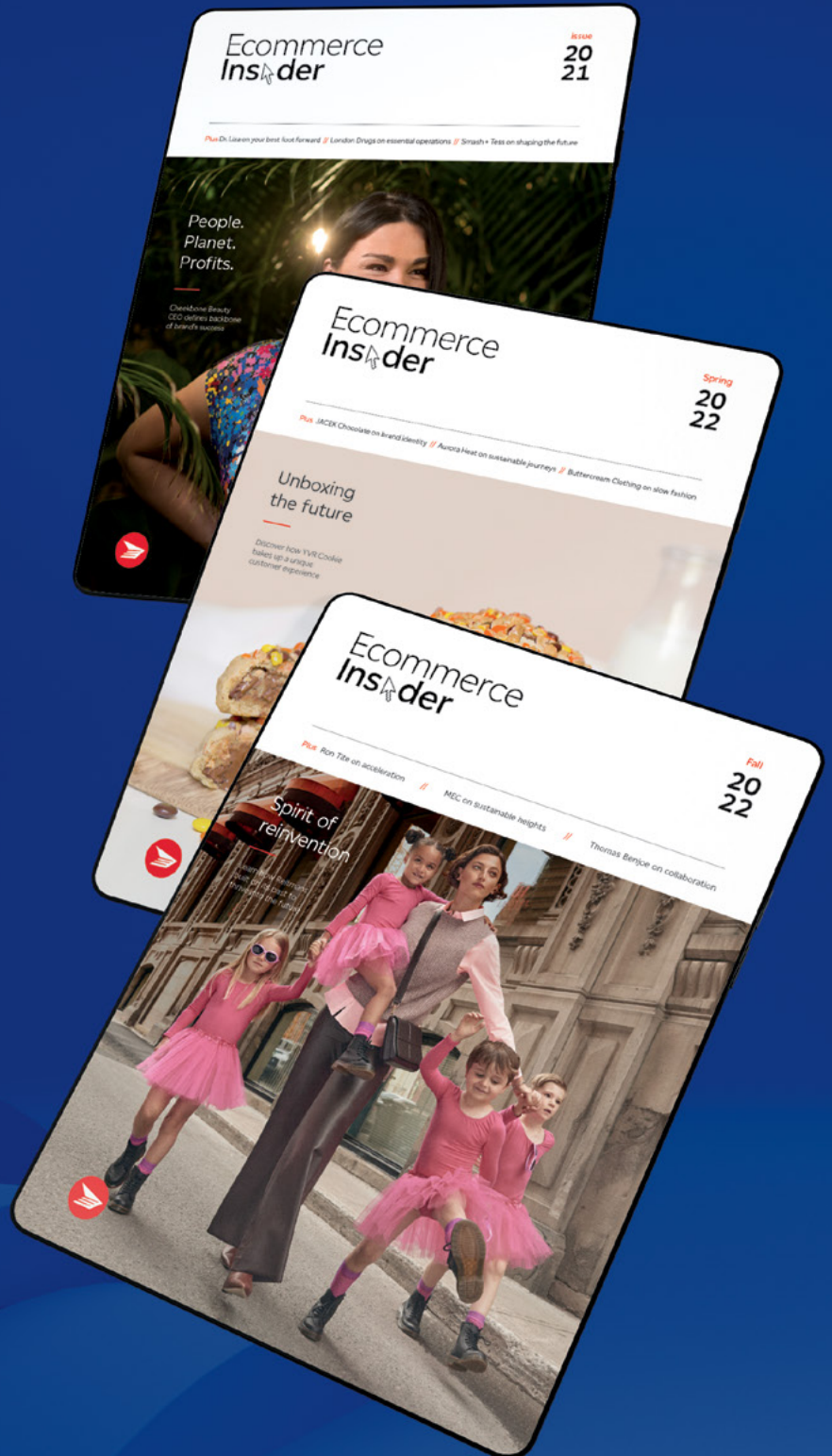




Every ecommerce business needs an edge. Here's yours.

Every issue of *Ecommerce Insider* provides insights and perspectives for businesses of all sizes. Stay on top of trends, get inspired by real business stories, and dive deeper into the mind of today's consumer.

Download issues free at canadapost.ca/GetInsider.





INVESTING IN THE HUMAN CONDITION

By Bilal Jaffery

*True understanding begins when brands see customers
as more than transactional data points.*

People (our customers) are facing a world that feels out of control. At a time when economic, social, environmental and political upheaval are turning things upside down, people are finding themselves increasingly in a multidirectional tug of war. Their decisions are seemingly contradictory, full of trade-offs and situational nuance. Attributes like sustainability go toe to toe with convenience while concerns over privacy are as important as expectations for personalization.

Consumers have always been comfortable being multidimensional, but many businesses continue to see them in rational, transactional terms – as walking wallets.

As evidenced by the misdirected offers in our email inboxes, long hold lines at the call centre and pointed net promoter score surveys that don't get actioned, we simply aren't understanding our customers well.

Accenture's recent research reveals a major disconnect between what consumers say they most value from companies and what companies appear to be investing in.

These paradoxical behaviours are not new; humans have always been emotional beings, processing hundreds of signals at any given moment, making decisions based on feelings, past experiences, self-image and values, current circumstances or expectations – not logic.

This has led to an increased realization that we need to do a better job understanding people as more than a mere interaction or transactional data point. Our methods need to move from product-centric to channel-centric to customer-centric to life-centric. This requires a modification in how we inform our analysis and drive and execute insights.

There are many ways of leveraging design thinking and technology to challenge our hypotheses and approach to analysis, slicing and dicing the variables to dig deeper into the art and science of human behaviour.

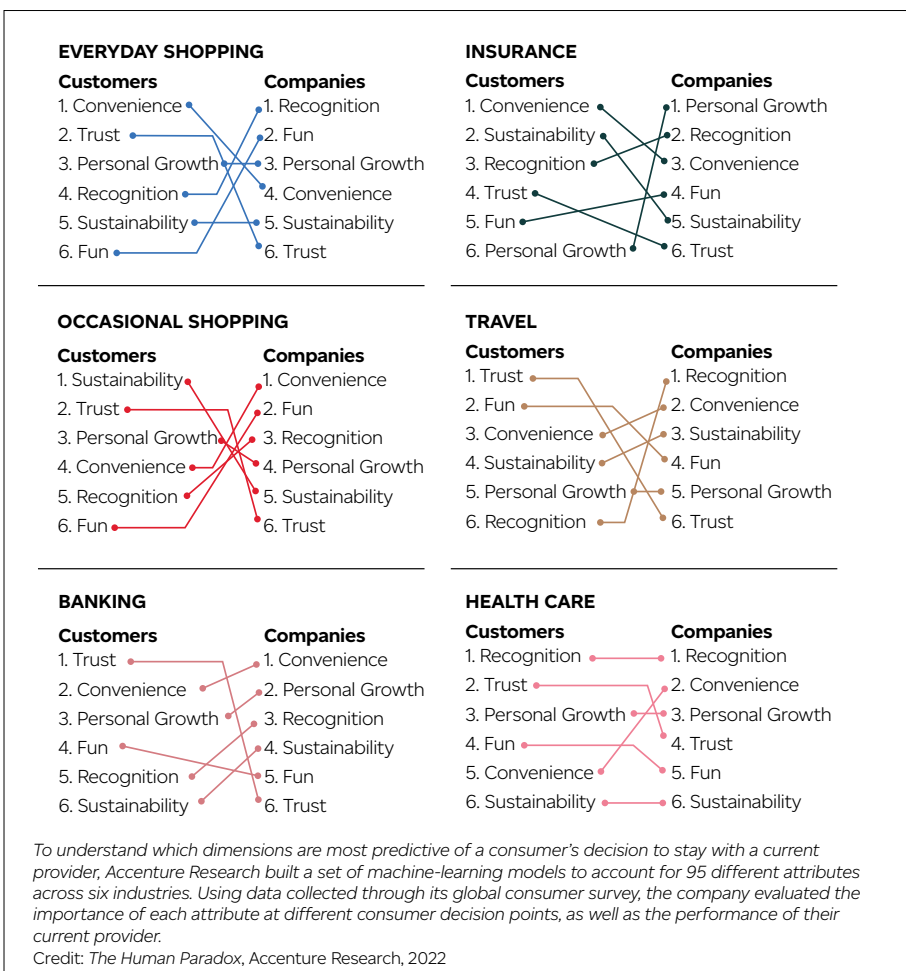
Let's start with:

1. Incorporating more empathy into how we design our intake processes, map our user stories and conduct qualitative research.
2. Leveraging AI and analytical systems to ingest millions of datapoints to uncover patterns we would have not humanly discovered and modelling for different consumer scenarios.
3. Using AI models to track the performance of customer attributes and action them across channels, using first-party and contextual data to sense changes in customer behavior.
4. Leveraging information design principles to visualize data outputs in a digestible and actionable way so that clients can leverage those insights to inform and adjust strategies to drive growth and relevance.

While understanding the human condition is a lifelong journey, by employing data-plus-design approaches, companies can make sense of and prioritize competing attributes to align investments and execute in a more compassionate, tailored and respectful manner. ■



Bilal Jaffery, head of customer data and marketing platforms at Accenture, is an award-winning digital executive with a 12-plus-year track record in successful digital transformation of top-tier brands like IBM, Bell Canada, Siemens Enterprise Communications & Extreme Networks.





THE WORK OF VISUALIZATION

Four professionals share what visualization means as a tool for seeing people, humanizing information, improving attention and solving problems.



HUMANIZING INFOGRAPHICS

Somewhere along the way, we devalued infographics – turning them into a basic commodity used to add a splash of shape and colour or, more often than not, replicate copy in an attempt to avoid TL;DR (too long; didn't read). This commoditization stemmed from an overdependency on those reusable graphics I know we all abused (the “clip art effect,” as I call it).

Information design suffered – a result of lazy design and even lazier thought.

Throughout human history, there has been no broader way to connect with other humans than through images. Yet, as we entered an age where thoughts could be made real, we got boring. Infographics became a crutch rather than an asset meant to engage, entice and educate.

Then the world grew smaller, more connected, more complex, more diverse – and then, in the midst of it all, a global pandemic made understanding infographics a matter of life or death. From governments to media, health units to urban planners, a need developed. Energy. Food. Supply chains. Climate change. The world demanded that communicators, particularly designers, be able to translate complex issues into digestible formats for the broadest audience.

Re-enter the thoughtful infographic – a perfect tool to increase accessibility, improve aesthetic and represent human connection. ■



Trong Nguyen is a technical designer with The&Partnership Toronto. Starting from product and environmental design, he has focused for the last decade on design and advertising: the thoughtful execution of what we see, interact with, communicate and feel.



PROBLEM SOLVING THROUGH SKETCHING

I always start with a sketch. Sketches are the basis for the art I create. As an illustrator, that comes naturally. I really can't imagine doing it any other way. I'm actually not that great at picturing things in my head (I think it's pretty rare that people are), so as soon as ideas start to percolate, my hands get itchy for pencil and paper.

For me, a sketch can start to make an idea real in a way that words alone can't. It's important to note here that the artifact, the sketch, is not as important as the act of sketching itself. That's because sketching is about problem solving.

You don't have to be good at drawing to make a sketch. Drawing is a separate skill; it

overlaps with sketching, but in most cases, proficiency is not essential.

A sketch is a map to the thing you're making. It can be as simple as writing down the problem and underlining a few words, making boxes around others and throwing in some arrows. There. You made a sketch. Doodling counts as sketching. Although they often don't directly relate to the problem at hand, they are the product of an active mind, a sign wheels are turning and a great way to break out of stale thought patterns.

Should you practise sketching? Yes. I honestly can't think of a tool I use more. ■



Jamie Brand is a Canadian art director and illustrator. He lives in Toronto with his wife, son and two lazy dogs. jamiebrand.ca

Get Back into the Swing

GOLF GROOVE

\$50 OFF
your next in-store purchase over \$150

Plus, get a **Free Bag** with any purchase over \$250

Scan the code to learn more. or visit our website: golfgroove.ca/promo

GOLF GROOVE

\$50 OFF
your next in-store purchase over \$150

Plus, get a **Free Bag** with any purchase over \$250

Scan the code to learn more. or visit our website: golfgroove.ca/promo

WHAT THE BRAIN SEES

What if you could see what gets people's attention? This is the value of tapping into attention data through neuroscience methods – especially in a consumer context, where attention is harder than ever to get.

The visual system in the brain is well understood and documented in academic literature. Across cultures and genders, we know what attracts initial attention. Visual elements such as human faces, high-contrast areas, bright colours and perfect shapes are noticed and processed by the brain within half a second. Knowing these biological facts is helping advertisers create ads and content that stand out and convert better.

Creative execution is responsible for 50% of the sales outcome, so getting it right has a big impact on marketing effectiveness. Here are some neuroscience tips for easier-

to-understand, more emotionally engaging and persuasive creative:

- › Use audience attention triggers.
- › Make your images and text work together.
- › Use the right amount of image/text content.
- › Focus on one main call to action.
- › Make your offer easy to understand.
- › Ensure lifestyle images are not distracting.
- › Use clear copy that's suited for the format.

When you can see it, you can design for it. The brain can tell us a lot about how to optimize creative to improve audience receptivity, reduce cognitive friction, appeal to rational and emotional drivers, and strengthen brand linkage and recall. ■



Neuromarketing scientist **Diana Lucaci** is co-founder and CEO of True Impact, former chair of the Neuromarketing Science and Business Association, committee member of the Standards Council of Canada and winner of the Best in Class research award from the Marketing Research and Intelligence Association. trueimpact.ca



SEEING THROUGH IMMERSION

This article was adapted with permission and thanks to APG Canada from "How to Build Day 5 Brands," part of APG's Grow Op Summer School podcast series. apgcanada.ca

My work in documentary filmmaking gave me an appreciation for the power of immersive ethnographic storytelling. That is the process where you go about finding answers by building trust with subjects, spending real time in their world, following their story wherever it goes. The more time you spend, the more revealing truths you see.

It is a format I have carried into my brand work and research today.

Certainly, it's not a process for every question you have as a business, but it is key for exploratory work like developing your positioning, understanding who your target

consumer is, entering a new space or looking to differentiate yourself in some way.

The most interesting insights come from interesting people. To get to deeper truths, you need to spend an inordinate amount of time making sure you find the right people for your goals. It's casting, not recruiting. You want people who genuinely want to talk to you and let you deeper into their lives.

Why would you look for important answers to your questions in superficial conversations?

It's in these hard-to-reach corners of people where their real wishes and desires live – and those wishes and desires are powerful for brands to understand. But you're only going to discover that kind of authenticity when you take the proper time to see people in real life. ■



Ian Pierpoint, founder and CEO of Further&Further, has 30 years of experience in research, strategy and marketing, working with brands including MTV, Nike, Unilever, Facebook and Google. furtherandfurtherstrategies.com



MAPPING YOUR WAY TO ADVANTAGE

Data visualization does more than paint pretty pictures – it helps marketers take action on insights.

Key Takeaways

Visualization is about more than seeing – it's also about acting.

Marketers need tools that provide a competitive advantage across media.

Data mapping brings first-, second- and third-party data together.

A journalist producing an investigative story on financial corruption. A city bureaucrat communicating the impacts of urban sprawl. A grad student tracing the roots of rhythm and blues. Even a scientist explaining community spread of a deadly virus.

Today, data visualization has become an essential skill for communicating the complex – a skill that’s about more than creating “pretty pictures” with data and instead about speaking clearly to the modern mind. Or as Kevin Hartman, chief analytics evangelist at Google, explained:

“As humans, we are programmed to see patterns, to pull meaning from cluttered amounts of information. What data visualization does is lift out those stories, those patterns and communicates them visually. It is the perfect way to communicate to other humans.”

While visualization does just that – makes data easy to digest by ensuring it tells a story – it is simultaneously structuring that data in a way that makes it possible to activate the insights being communicated. For businesses, that means data visualization provides an opportunity to not only process and understand its possibilities but also apply them in a meaningful way.

Visualization is about more than seeing – it is also about acting.

ROOTED IN A VISUAL HISTORY

You could start with cave drawings, if you wish. Or perhaps flash forward a few millennia to Flemish astronomer Michael Florent van Langren’s line graph charting the difference in longitude between Toledo and Rome. Or you could look at Scottish political economist William Playfair’s graph showing changes in wheat prices over 250 years. No matter where you drop your finger on the human timeline, visualization of some sort has been an elemental part of the way we communicate.

Why does visualization work? Well, it’s just a matter of how the brain processes information. Data visualization is effective because it shifts the balance between perception and cognition to take better advantage of the brain’s abilities.

“For marketers, that answer is simple – your visualization tool should provide a competitive advantage across all media.”

Seeing (visual perception) is handled by the visual cortex located in the rear of the brain; this process is extremely fast and efficient. Thinking (cognition), on the other hand, is handled predominantly by the cerebral cortex in the front of the brain; this process is much slower and less efficient. That means traditional data presentation methods (think about those unforgiving spreadsheets) require conscious thinking to do all of the work. Data visualization, however, shifts the balance toward visual perception, to take advantage of the speed of seeing.

The better designed and more thoughtfully structured the data visualization, the more understandable, dimensional and useful it becomes and the faster it can be read and registered. That means you can move data into action far faster.

PUTTING THE STORY INTO ACTION

How does the best visualization work? Simply stated, the best data visualization tools don’t require a data scientist to read them – the eyes shouldn’t lie when it comes to data visualization.

The uninitiated tend to write off visualization as nothing more than pretty pictures for those who cannot wrestle with the complexities of a spreadsheet. Yes, graphic aesthetics are key to data visualization – that’s something a spreadsheet can never have. But visualization must also be so much more – novel, informative and efficient.

Data visualization and mapping tools structure data in ways that offer new layers of insight, relevance and perspective. One important area of application is in media and audience targeting – integrating data and looking at different audience dimensions to hone targeting criteria and strategies most valuable to your campaign goals.

The best of these tools offer an ease of use, can integrate large sets of data from different sources within a single visualization and can create a compelling and informative

output. These tools should tear down the data silos that block actual insights and instead bring first-, second- and third-party data together in a coherent way.

KEY STRUGGLES FOR MARKETERS

Both the art and the science of visualization help marketers address some important struggles when it comes to advertising effectiveness:

- › Understanding, identifying and reaching target audiences remain chief among challenges. Right now, Canadian marketers think they can accomplish this through digital and social platforms, but these are proving to be messy, with unclear, inconsistent or even disappointing results in the quality of connections digital channels make on their own.
- › Cross-channel data integration is vital today as addressable audience strategies diversify in the wake of data privacy and new ad tech solutions that the industry is working on. The need to unify first-, second- and third-party data across channels has become harder, yet increasingly critical.
- › Data silos within our organizations and walled-garden media investments have made it nearly impossible to connect the dots. Data transparency and integration remain challenges of communication as much as technology.

Data mapping, however, can overcome these challenges.

APPLYING THE RIGHT TOOLS

There are a host of visualization tools on the market, with everyone from niche apps to mega-corporations offering their own solutions. Picking the correct one, however, is a matter of understanding your goals, gaps and the job you need help performing.

For marketers, that answer is simple – your visualization tool should provide a competitive advantage across all media.



Legend

Filter

Layer list

Campaign

Store locations



DM Distribution Routes

Mailed

Mailed and Visited

Visited

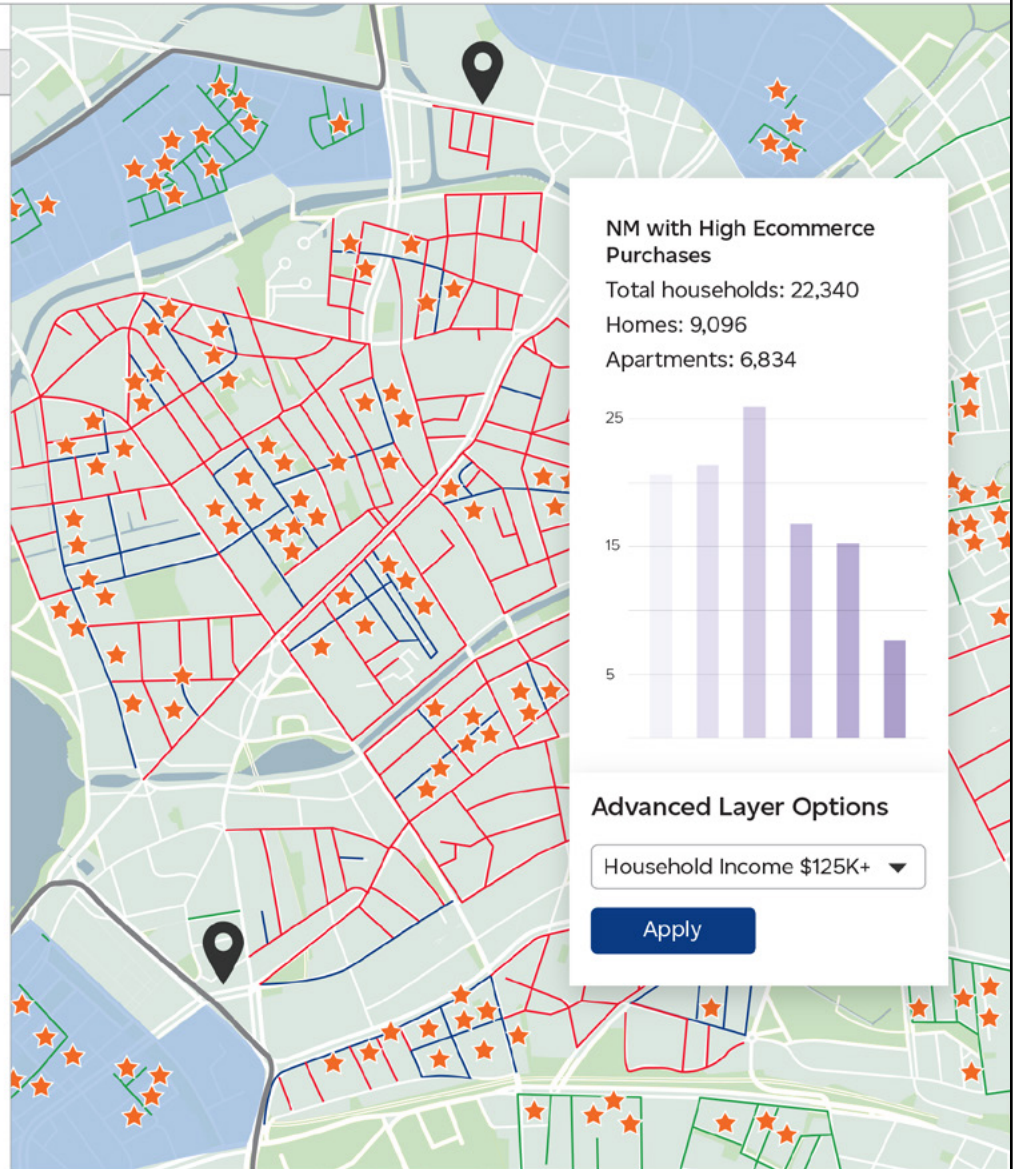
Customer store visits

NM with High Ecommerce Purchases

Drive Time

Previous DM Campaign

Hhld Income \$125k+



SEE WHAT VISUALIZATION CAN DO

Visualization takes the guesswork out of data and delivers insights that bring your marketing strategy to the next level. Don't get lost in the numbers – see you how your customer data intersects with store locations, previous campaign results and key audience characteristics to help refine your targeting strategy and maximize your direct mail results.

UNDERSTAND

Overlay multiple data sets to uncover new insights about your audience.

TARGET

Develop your campaign strategy for maximum effectiveness.

OPTIMIZE

View campaign results to optimize your next campaign.

Let's take Canada Post's data visualization tool as an example. This tool, supported by a data analytics team, maps out data so decision makers can visually explore audience targeting opportunities and strategies. It can overlay different data sets – customer data, store locations, competitor data, mobile foot traffic data, demographics and other Canada Post proprietary data. It can produce multiple data overlays to make data more tangible, connecting the dots in new ways so that you can create a multidimensional picture of targeting opportunity.

This data can be uploaded to digital ad platforms like Facebook to improve digital targeting or be used to manage cross-channel and direct mail programmatic targeting. You can even map direct mail response data for post-analysis and optimization (test, learn, adapt).

This versatility provides solutions to multiple problems:

- › An organization without reliable first-party data can lean in to mobile geolocation tracking data around their store locations to let foot traffic guide their mailings to look-alike postal codes.
- › An e-commerce business without a physical location can combine its first-party data with mobile data around competitor locations or postal code data showing high propensity for online category shopping in order to acquire new customers.
- › A business that doesn't understand who its potential customers are can overlay existing customer data, previous mailing locations, competitor data, mobile foot traffic data and psychographic clusters to see pockets of opportunity to grow a customer base.

“By thinking more about what you need from data to reach, relate to and activate your desired audience, the performance of each channel will become more effective.”

Across these sample use cases, the same general solution is applied: putting data to work in a clear and accessible way that can be applied across channels and to direct mail specifically.

AMPLIFYING THE VALUE OF DIRECT MAIL MEDIA

While we're not suggesting direct mail is the only solution, the evidence tells us that direct mail, postal code data and the home can bring new insight and increased effectiveness to audience addressability and the customer journey – filling in reach gaps, reducing targeting waste and improving message relevance and cross-media conversion, according to the latest WARC whitepaper, “Driving Effectiveness with Direct Mail.”

Advertisers are finding it necessary to re-evaluate how to identify, target and engage audiences in a privacy-compliant, brand-safe way that does not compromise experience or advertising effectiveness.

By thinking more about what you need from data to reach, relate to and activate your desired audience, the performance of each channel will become more effective. When considering what identity data you need for targeting, don't overlook the potential in people's homes. Even as the world emerges from the pandemic and many workplaces and classrooms begin to fill again, the role of the home has forever

changed and will remain a key stop in the customer journey and the main location for consumer decision making and influence as brands increasingly lean in to direct-to-consumer strategies.

Data visualization helps businesses and organizations connect with people in the home environment through a media format that can speak to them about what they are interested in and care about at the individual level.

As ad tech fails and data persistence erodes, data mapping and visualization tools can fill the need for data insight that reinforces your strategies and tactics toward your goals as an organization. ■

Read More >>

Go to canadapost.ca/incite to download these articles from our archive for more on making that one-to-one connection.



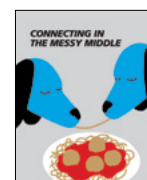
INCITE 2022 03
Reconfiguring Identity



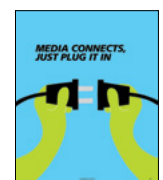
INCITE 2022 02
Direct, Naturally



INCITE 2021 03
Direct Mail Brings Media Home



INCITE 2021 02
Connecting in the Messy Middle



INCITE 2020 03
Media Connects, Just Plug It In



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

THE DIRECT EFFECT

- › Adapting to one-to-one commerce
- › Using media fragmentation to your advantage
- › Balancing personalization and social currency
- › Turning participation into activation
- › Getting the most out of direct channels

“We actively seek out shareable content that helps marketing professionals strengthen their impact on business success. *INCITE* answers the call.”

– Judy Morfitt, marketing lead,
Canadian Marketing Association

GET MORE *INCITE* AT canadapost.ca/incite



Secrets of

Direct Mail

Webinar Series



Uncover new insights and opportunities

Consumer preferences are constantly in flux. Get the inspiration you need to stay one step ahead. Join data and marketing leaders for their proven tips, tricks and best practices. Discover their secrets – and leverage them to maximize your own marketing results.

Explore our growing array of free on-demand webinars today.

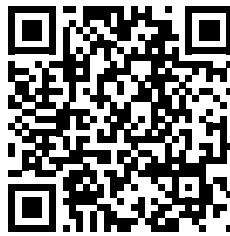


Scan the QR
code or visit
canadapost.ca/Secrets
to watch today.



**Smartmail
Marketing™**

™Smartmail Marketing and the Wing in Circle Design
are trademarks of Canada Post Corporation.



SCAN HERE TO TAKE YOUR
COPY OF **INCITE** ON THE GO



Smartmail Marketing™