

DIRECT MARKETING

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THE ART & SCIENCE OF PREDICTABLE MARKETING

Fundraising in the digital age

Canadian charities are changing the way they approach fundraising

By Kevin Wolfley

According to Statistics Canada, charitable donations are on the decline. In fact, the percentage of Canadians who give back has been declining since 2007 with individual donations decreasing by almost \$1-billion between 2007 and 2009. Now, more than ever, making philanthropy more accessible is crucial to non-profit organizations that are operating with limited resources- and online fundraising is doing just that.

For Canadians who are eager to give back, the donation options can sometimes be overwhelming and bulky. Social media sites like Facebook and Twitter have replaced the

more traditional forms of communication like mail, online shopping is growing, and electronic payments are taking the place of cash and cheques and are leading to new forms of funding, like micro-payments. All three are changing the way we exchange ideas and money. Non-profit organizations also need to change the way they approach fundraising by using these new tools to make it easier for Canadians to give back.

Last year, following the successful launch in the U.S., eBay Canada launched Giving Works, a program that enables Canadians to make a difference and gives non-profit organizations an out-of-the-box solution

for online fundraising.

One feature, called Give at Checkout, is modelled after the donations often collected at grocery store checkouts. Similar to the "ask" when shoppers pay for their groceries, every time a buyer makes a purchase on eBay.ca they have the opportunity to add an online cash donation to a featured non-profit. The organization benefits from each and every purchase made on the site.

Since its launch in August 2011, eBay has raised funds for well-known Canadian charities including Free The Children, Rethink Breast Cancer, and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada through Give at Checkout. Unlike more traditional fundraising

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Editor's Letter

Amy Bostock

Helping people do good—one click at a time



The *Blackbaud Index of Online Giving*, an excellent resource that's updated quarterly, reported that online giving increased by 10 per cent in 3rd quarter 2011 in comparison to that period in 2010. It further increased by 3.3 per cent in November 2011 to January 2012 compared to that period in 2011.

The use of social media and other digital channels for fundraising is a top-of-mind issue for many nonprofits who are struggling with the challenges of reaching a diverse donor base who have equally diverse communications preferences.

In this issue of *Direct Marketing* we're focusing on fundraising in the digital age. From how to improve your email campaigns to ways to use social media to engage donors, our experts have covered the wide range of communications tools available to NFPs in this increasingly digital world.

We've got some great case studies showcasing how Canadian fundraisers are utilizing digital with very successful outcomes. Our cover story comes from eBay Canada who's Giving Works program is enabling donors to give online in an easy and convenient manner – essentially making it easier to do good. We've also gathered some advice on what NOT to do. And since every good digital campaign begins with a website, we've brought you a sector report on the importance of Search Engine Optimization (including a synopsis of what the heck SEO really is) for making sure your website is found by the right audience at the right time.

Speaking of the right people at the right time, nothing says targeted communication like variable data printing. According to the folks at Xerox, although it used to be sufficient to advertise your business anywhere and everywhere, hoping that

people would notice you and that your hard work would pay off, VDP technology can make it easier to reach your target audience and develop loyal, long-term relationships.

Our Regional Report this month takes us back to our country's technology triangle and a diverse group of DM suppliers who are supporting a growing business sector – thanks to the presence of both existing and new high tech companies.

Calling all tree huggers!

The June issue is our annual Sustainable DM issue with a special focus this year on environmentally-friendly printing, paper and packaging processes (say that 10 times fast). If you have a green solution you'd like to share with your customers and peers, please call or email me ASAP – editorial deadline for the issue is May 15.

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Directives How to raise \$1,000,000 for your charity using social media



Leah Eustace

“The true power of social media to non-profits is in its ability, when done right, to build community, to engage an audience, and to create fan base that will then advocate for and promote your cause.”

But that caught your attention. Unfortunately, a short article is never going to turn you into a social media fundraising superstar. But it can steer you in the right direction.

On a fairly regular basis, I hear from charities who lament their aging donor base. They worry about the future of their organization, and feel that the answer is to bring younger people on as donors. And we all know that younger people can be found on Facebook and Twitters, so why not go out and raise a bunch of money using social media? Makes sense, right?

The first thing I always tell them is that social media is not a fundraising tool (not directly, anyway); it's a communications and stewardship tool.

The fact of the matter is that very, very few charities are raising much money using social media platforms. In fact, according to the recently released Nonprofit Social Benchmark Report (produced by NTEN, Common Knowledge and Blackbaud), only 3% of charities raised more than \$10,000 on Facebook last year, and less than 1% raised more than \$100,000. As for Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+ and FourSquare ... well, the fundraising revenue was negligible.

Those charities that were successful in raising six figures, who the Report calls “Master Fundraisers,” had a few common characteristics: at least two full time staff managing their social media, and a Facebook following of around 100,000 (more than 15 times the general average).

Do you share those characteristics? I didn't think so. So should we just give up on social media? No, of course not. It's here to stay, at least for the

foreseeable future, and it's an important part of our fundraising toolbox –a toolbox that also contains direct mail, telephone, email, face-to-face, and any number of other marketing tools (none of which work all that well in isolation).

The true power of social media to non-profits is in its ability, when done right, to build community, to engage an audience, and to create fan base that will then advocate for and promote your cause. And who do you think will be out ahead when those younger people are ready to choose causes to donate to? It will be those charities who, over the years, have made them feel part of a community; who have engaged them in conversation; and who have made them feel special in some way.

But it's not a simple as just having a social media presence. You need an effective social media presence, and that includes a sound strategy, good listening skills, and the ability to react quickly – especially to a crisis. Look at the recent controversy around Komen for the Cure's decision to discontinue funding Planned Parenthood. Just Google “Komen and Planned Parenthood” to read all about it.

As soon as the story broke, Facebook and Twitter erupted in opinion and criticism. Planned Parenthood was there from the get go, engaging their social media community, giving them the tools they need to advocate on behalf of the cause, and rallying further support. They even sent an e-appeal out within hours.

Komen? Well, they were completely silent for the first 24 hours. And since one social media hour is equivalent to about a month “in

real life,” that silence had all sorts of negative repercussions. Kivi Leroux Miller, on her blog nonprofitmarketingguide.com calculated that the ratio of anti-Komen's decision to pro-Komen's decision was about 80 to 1 on Twitter alone.

So, a sound social media strategy needs to include a bit of disaster planning, but it also needs to focus on engagement. Too many charities use Facebook and Twitter as substitute fax machine, broadcasting press releases to as many people as possible. It's all push and no pull. Don't believe me? Just pull up a few random social media accounts. You'll see what I mean.

Successful charities engage with their audience. Yes, they share information, but they also ask questions, share stories, get into conversations, and give their community the tools they need to help spread the word. Don't be afraid to experiment a bit. How many likes and shares do you get when you post a photo? Ask a question? Share a press release? What works for your charity (it might not be what works for every charity)? Work hard to get your social media community to sign up for your email list; drive them to your website. That's where the real online fundraising is going to happen.

In the meantime, I'm going to continue trying to convince charities that social media is not the answer to all their fundraising problems. At the end of the day, mail is still king of the castle from a charity direct marketing point of view.

Leah Eustace, CFRE, is the Principal and Chief Idea Goddess at Good Works in Ottawa, ON

A different shade of green

The world is changing and DM suppliers are also changing the ways they provide environmentally responsible solutions to their clients. Hear from printers, agencies, data companies and more in our Sustainable DM issue.

The changing face of Pitney Bowes

During a recent sit down with John O'Hara, *Direct Marketing* magazine had a chance to ask about the recent changes at Pitney Bowes as the company evolves to meet the changing needs of their customers.

Regional Report: Vancouver

Well known as a “green” DM hub, learn some interesting industry facts about Vancouver's direct marketing sector that you may NOT have known in our monthly Regional Report feature.

Coming in the June issue of *Direct Marketing*

FUNDRAISING

Case Study: MSF Warehouse

Online gift catalogue campaign nets huge results for charity

The challenge:

Realizing the power of the digital space, MSF decided to focus its efforts online. Stephen Thomas proposed a symbolic gift catalogue whereby prospective MSF supporters could view products that MSF uses in the field and purchase them – either as a donation or as a gift.

The solution

A new brand identity was developed and a custom-designed e-commerce site was built. Products ranged from Cholera Kits to Doctors’ Missions. Site features included a Wish List, Send an e-Card, and impulse items at checkout.

A four week marketing campaign in Toronto generated media buzz and drove traffic to the MSF Warehouse site. To highlight the delivery of lifesaving products, actual crates were designed, produced and mounted on bus shelters. Additional support advertising was purchased in the free commuter dailies. Google & Facebook campaigns were executed along with a series of MSF Warehouse branded emails to MSF supporters.



Agency:
Stephen Thomas Ltd.
Taslim Somani – Account/Digital Marketing Director
Julie Gales – Senior Account Manager
Karen Kung – Account Manager
Diane Faure – Account Coordinator
Bryan Tenenhouse – Creative Director
Mimi Maxwell – Art Director

Client:
Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF Warehouse)
Rebecca Davies – Director of Fundraising
Conan MacLean – Fundraising Manager
Patrick McConnell – Direct Marketing Coordinator
Kevin Hill - Digital Marketing Representative
Naomi Sutorius - Press Officer



The results

In six weeks, the MSF Warehouse covered all campaign costs. More than \$183K in donations were generated, equivalent to a 173% ROI. The average gift was \$148, 18% higher than the average online gift for international relief organizations across North America. Year-over-year, online donations on MSF.ca were up by 30%. Additionally, a whopping 228% return was achieved on the Facebook ad campaign.

The quest for digital riches

Charities searching for ways to utilize online technologies for better campaign results



By Gord Muschett

The digital space. Lots of hyperbole and promises of new digital riches but is that pot of gold really there?

No, I mean really there. Other than peer-to-peer events, results from across North America too often suggest otherwise.

So will e-philanthropy ever represent a significant percentage of most charitable organizations direct response dollars? The jury is still out on that one. But that doesn't mean charities won't find ways to utilize online technologies to better deliver their own programs and services.

The Donnée Group has for years been a leader in using technology to increase the net revenue of direct response programs. For years, we've been using a sophisticated online project management system that has allowed us to dramatically reduce costs for direct mail campaigns and ensure these campaigns are delivered on time.

In the last few months, the digital space has become even more exciting for our agency with our release of three new online products.

The Winning Test captures in a searchable online format the results of tests we have compiled over the years. Does the outer envelope with the "Please give by December 1st," tagline beat the envelope without this teaser? What's the latest in 2 vs. 4 page testing? Does a totebag beat a label package on a net revenue basis? The Winning Test answers these questions and many more. You'll also find a handy sample size calculator and other best practice tips for ensuring your own tests reveal compelling results.

Do you collect direct response campaigns from other organizations? So do we. And now with *Campaign Spy*, we've compiled our collection into an online repository that holds e-campaigns

and direct mail appeals from across the country. *Campaign Spy* is also searchable by charity type (health charity, environmental organization, etc.) and campaign type.

That's not all. We're also very excited to announce what is the most comprehensive survey of Canadian direct response donors that has ever been undertaken. Over 1,000 such donors from across the country were asked their opinions of the charities they support – and those they don't. We've captured the results of this survey within a ranked index we call *Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down*. Our comparative rankings revealed that 18 charities received a 'Thumbs Up' from Canadian donors, 20 received a 'Thumbs Down' and 19 charities had a neutral ranking.

We think it's too bad that the online world sometimes generates a fair bit of cynicism as various hucksters come out to promote the latest fad of the day. We know it's particularly challenging for organizations with limited resources to pursue the latest 'opportunities' that some unscrupulous 'experts' would have you believe are vital to your continued survival.

Fortunately, there's still a role for true, data-driven knowledge and empirical research. The Donnée Group is a learning organization and we're happy to share our knowledge with you.

Admittedly, these tools do require an attention span that's a little beyond what some have come to expect in the social media age. But sometimes real substance and cutting-edge research is tough to squeeze into 140 characters...

Gord Muschett is a Partner with The Donnée Group, a direct response agency focused in the not-for-profit sector. With an empirical approach to data-driven marketing, it's true what they say: "Our accent is on the data"!



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FUNDRAISING

Case study: The True Spirit of Christmas: Facebook Campaign for World Vision



The problem

As Christmas approached, World Vision U.S. wanted to move its popular Gift Catalogue into the social networking sphere. They had made some progress the previous year by launching a Facebook page called *The True Spirit of Christmas*, which featured the Gift Catalogue. This year, they wanted to grow the

viral component around the catalogue and turn up the volume on the conversation about alternative gifts for the holidays.

The solution

World Vision asked Blue North to help develop an approach for Facebook to build awareness of the World Vision Gift Catalogue and encourage sharing online.

Blue North developed a Facebook page featuring World Vision gifts, a video series about the impact of the gifts, and two Facebook apps to encourage awareness and engagement in the campaign.

The first app encouraged people to “send your friends a free Facebook gift to share the True Spirit of Christmas.” Through this app, users could select one of nine animals—

anything from a chick to a cow—which are available in the World Vision Gift Catalogue. These cute, appealing animals represented the alternative gifts you can give through World Vision to help children and families in need.

The user simply selected an animal, selected the friends who would receive it, and clicked to send the “gift.” This app gave

people an easy way to show their support for the World Vision Gift Catalogue and raise awareness of alternative gifts.

The second app invited Facebook users to personalize their profile picture by adding an animal dressed up in a Christmas item like a Santa hat or a striped scarf. The user selected the animal, selected some fun clothing, and placed the animal into their profile picture. Like the first app, this one gave users an easy way to promote the World Vision Gift Catalogue. It also allowed them to invite their friends to create their own personalized profile picture, further spreading the word about the catalogue.

The apps were located on the *True Spirit of Christmas* Facebook page, which encouraged people to choose from 240 gift ideas in the Gift Catalogue. It also featured a video series that followed the True Spirit of Christmas by traveling to Tanzania and Ghana, meeting children whose lives had been changed by gifts from the World Vision Gift Catalogue. The website announced a goal: to reach 600,000 lives with World Vision Gifts, an increase over the previous year. The campaign kicked off in November and ended December 31st.

Results

The website and the two playful apps generated a greater awareness of World Vision's Gift Catalogue items and the campaign reached the goal of 600,000 lives impacted with World Vision Gifts, an increase over the previous year. The two apps drove engagement and awareness of the program on Facebook and more than doubled the number of Facebook Likes through November and December to over 48,000.

Blue North Crate is a creative digital agency that helps Not-For-Profit organizations Do More Good by leveraging the Social + Mobile web. We help our clients engage donors, raise funds, and change the world. You can reach them at www.bluenorthcrate.com



By Nicole Merrett

Donor acquisition and development campaigns face many of the same response challenges business communications do, often with the added complexity of being subject to an individual donor's or organization's capacity to give after their own financial obligations have been considered. Maintaining relationships with generous supporters is critical to maintaining and, ideally, growing contributions. Email marketing campaigns – while perceived by some

Fuel your fundraising with better email marketing

as an aging approach to donor appeals – have continued to modernize with technology. Email can help cultivate valuable relationships and grow funding, provided you use automation, personalization, and analytics tools to your advantage.

Consider these email marketing tips for your next fundraising campaigns:

Give to receive

Try offering content-rich emails that emphasize more than a donation appeal. While fundraising is your main objective, and donors inherently recognize this, providing helpful content is a method for improving goodwill and supporters' response to you over time. A non-profit that includes financial or tax preparation

tips in its email newsletter, for example, is sharing insights that can benefit its audience in their everyday lives and, as these tips are applied, recipients may also find their donation capacities increasing.

Remove donor obstacles

Create simple, easy-to-use donation forms to embed within your emails and on web landing pages. These forms can help donors give at the transactional moment of truth, when your appeal directly reaches them. When donors can complete a transaction without leaving your page, they are less likely to abandon your cause and can contribute to both your funding growth and improved conversion rates. Also, consider integrating your email campaigns

with fundraising software that helps automate data collection and maintain PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliance for credit card transactions. Establishing the right infrastructure to help manage your campaigns will pay for itself over time.

Analyze activity

Evaluate how recipients interact with your emails and the previously discussed donor forms. Many email services include analytics tools that monitor how much time readers spend with your emails; if they are forwarded to friends or family members; and which landing pages are visited.

Prioritizing your follow-up efforts on individuals who exhibit the greatest signs of interest can materially impact your results.

Test every element

Your emails may look good, have compelling calls to action, and pass spam checks, but still exhibit weak open rates. You should continually test specific elements of campaigns. Doing this takes time but is not difficult.

Evaluate one change at a time. Explore what days recipients are more likely to open your email. Divide your list and send each set the same email on different days to see if a specific day produces better responses. Next, determine what time of day people are most willing to open your emails and complete a donor transaction by splitting up your list and sending your email at different times.

After you identify specific days and times recipients are

most responsive, examine your content. What subject lines gain the best response? Do recipients react more to graphics or text? Consider the placement of your call to action. Is one position more effective than another? Do recipients read lengthy pieces or quick appeals?

Rinse and repeat

Once you approach record-breaking results with a specific campaign, there may be no reason to abandon it. A little updating may be warranted; otherwise, do not fix something that isn't broken. Many email marketing tools and online services can help you quickly launch cost-effective rapid response campaigns. You can customize messages and forms by simply swapping out content with a few

clicks and confirming your recipient lists. Of course, as previously mentioned, continue to test segments, creative, etc. to maximize your campaign, especially if you see results start to stagnate or trend downward.

Email marketing technology provides more insights and flexibility than many people realize. Use it to learn about your donors, make improvements that connect with them, and improve funding for your causes.

Nicole Merrett is vice president of CRM marketing for Sage North America, a supplier of business management software and services for small and midsized businesses.

Mining your data to do more good – a checklist for fundraisers

By Jan Kestle

The combination of economic challenges and government cutbacks has left many of our not-for-profit customers behind the eight-ball when it comes to meeting their fundraising targets. In developing strategies for success in these tough times, we often find that going back to basics helps produce lift in the response rates of future campaigns. Here's a checklist of ideas to consider before launching your next fundraising effort:

1. Revisit the best donor target definition.

Whether you define your donor segments by custom modeling, geodemographic profiling or giving behaviour, the target definition for both acquisition and retention campaigns needs to be reviewed from time to time. That means more than just making minor adjustments to your donor list based on the performance of your last campaign. Rather, you should take a hard look at the whole donor base along with the best and poor performing subsets and mine the information you have gathered to come up with a fresh definition of your target. Chances are good that your revised donor target pool won't be entirely new—there will be much overlap with your previous profile—but very frequently new groups or behaviours will emerge that indicate you need to augment your target and cast a wider net for prospective donors.

2. Test and measure. Unfortunately, tough financial times can cause organizations to cut back on the wrong things. I am surprised when marketers say, "We would love to test lists, new targets or new messages but we just can't afford to." In truth, you can't afford not to. Whether you are deploying a traditional mail-based campaign or

email, testing and measurement are still essential to successful direct marketing. Fundraisers should build a small test into every campaign and leverage those results for better response rates in subsequent campaigns.

3. Capture as much data as you can.

We often hear from fundraisers that they don't know how a donor's name got into their database. Profiling a database against the general population without any consideration for who had the opportunity to donate in the first place results in an erroneous profile. Combining a full profile with a recent response analysis is a step in the right direction, but that should never replace a regular analysis of who donated as a result of which campaign and what medium. Results of that analysis are invaluable for future programs. Regardless of where you are in your database development, it's important to capture to the best extent possible the donor "source" and maintain this crucial information when designing future campaigns.

4. Combine media. While most not-for-profits recognize the value and cost savings of digital campaigns, some fundraisers tell us they can't get started because they don't have digital information on their donors—and they don't have the budget to develop online tools. Our customers have achieved success by using unaddressed postcards featuring a compelling message that sends potential donors to a website where they register their email address to get more information (and, of course, give proper consent for a later email appeal).

5. Vary the message. Differentiated messaging should be standard procedure by now in direct marketing,



but many fundraisers forego this approach due to perceived costs. Our research shows that people respond to appeals for different reasons. Demographics and past behaviour are not the whole story when it comes to consumer behaviour, and when it comes to not-for-profits, identifying the right motivator for specific donor groups is more important than ever. Using different appeals (including text, images and design) within the same campaign produces better results when the targeting matches the creative with the prospect group and the media channels they prefer. This holistic approach can be applied to addressed and unaddressed mail and digital campaigns alike. The research foundation is available to create

differentiated message campaigns and, thanks to technological advances in printing and segmentation, the cost to execute them is lower than in the past. Of course, the old adage still applies: You do have to spend money to raise money. But by applying best practices and leveraging the best data available, you should be able to more than cover your costs and achieve better results. And that means you can do more good.

Founder and President of Environics Analytics, Jan Kestle has been a leader in the marketing information industry for nearly forty years. An expert in using statistics and mathematics to help solve business challenges, she has worked with hundreds of clients in all industries to help them find and serve their customers.

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SECTOR REPORT



Use your words!

Michael Bickerton from JBM Interactive Ltd. answers *Direct Marketing's* questions about the importance of optimizing website content

Q: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a term tossed about by marketers but many don't have a real understanding of what it entails. Could you clear up what SEO is and how to use it?

A: SEO is the process of improving your website's, microsite's or landing page's natural or "organic" ranking in the search engines. Generally, the search engines (Google, Bing, Yahoo) rank pages based on relevant content as determined by their algorithms.

SEO considers how the search engines work, what people search for, how they search (i.e. keywords) and/or key phrases). In many CMS (content management systems) the meta data and meta descriptions can be aligned with the keywords and key phrases. Additionally, headlines, page titles and actual copy all work together to ensure that search terms and search results provide the "user" with a relevant and valuable result.

Other contributing factors that make your page search friendly are content, the html coding within a page and inbound links (backlinks). It's important to note that the process of SEO is constantly changing. Google especially, is fine-tuning, changing and adjusting. As such, your website pages need to be evolving as well. Your organic rank is NOT guaranteed! Today you have it, and tomorrow you don't. No one can guarantee your organic ranking. Beware those that make claims about putting your website and landing page on page one of the search engines.

In providing SEO advice, the standard process discusses the following: site structure, site content, site hosting, error pages, meta data, content development,

keyword and key phrase research.

Experience has shown time and again that content - mainly relevant content - is critical to your SEO. Organic ranking improves with lots of relevant, current and timely content posted on a regular basis. Content is king, search engines love content.

The most important thing to keep in mind about SEO and the search engines is that their existence depends on results. Google's reason for existence is to ensure that Mike finds what Mike wants, when Mike wants it.

But remember, SEO is just one segment of an overall digital and marketing strategy.

Q: Why is optimizing your website so important to running a successful marketing campaign?

A: SEO is one segment of maintaining and creating a successful marketing campaign. Organic rank is one of the hardest areas to develop and building your organic ranking takes time- there is no quick fix or quick result.

Although it's been shown that ranking highly in Google search does seem to have impact on CTR, although Google has never officially confirmed that it tracks this statistic. Part of this changing landscape is related to location, and local search is impacting and changing the way search and research results are being shown. Keep in mind that Google announces changes monthly. Even the experts have trouble keeping track and evaluating the impact of those changes.

There is some discussion that user data is playing more of a role in organizing search results, as is local search. SEO and PPC (pay-per-click) are related and they work

in conjunction with each other. The basis for search is keywords and key phrases, and Goggle's controlled approach ensures that smart online marketers are providing relevant landing pages.

SEO is not appropriate for all programs, and keep in mind that building your organic rank takes time, as time is one of the factors Google considers in the ranking process. Often you'll note less relevant content ranking ahead just based on the time criteria.

SEO is one segment and of a longer term digital or marketing strategy and imperative. SEO is important and can have impact on a longer-term basis. However, keep in mind if your needs are more immediate, then PPC is a far quicker, yet far more costly alternative.

Today, every thing is measurable. Both your paid search and your organic search can be tracked, measured and evaluated.

Q: Does the ROI that can be had by optimizing your site justify the cost of doing it?

A: My pet peeve about ROI is that everyone is talking about it, and many advertisers are making "claims" about ROI and yet I think it's the most misunderstood term used in the digital space. Prior to making ROI claims and determining results, every company needs to get started and establish baselines in all areas - website/landing page analytics, PPC, SEO, email marketing and social media.

Making claims and statements and worse, measuring and determining ROI before establishing baselines is like winning a fight before the bout (at the press conference) ... it can't be done. There many digital advertisers making great ROI

claims without proving a necessary and valuable start point.

SEO and optimizing your site is a must. Essentially every company should have their websites and landing pages evaluated in order to determine the opportunities that are available to make gains, whether in leads, in contacts and/or in actual sales dollars.

How do you know if you're making improvement? With no baseline how does an advertiser know for sure? I'm always astounded by the "new" requirements of proving ROI to marketers that for many years were using the "spend and hope" methodology. With NO measurement, or limited measurement opportunities, millions were spent on Yellow Pages, newspaper, radio and direct mail, and yet today, all that is discussed is ROI of specific project.

Again, with no baseline there is NO effective ROI ... as such, optimizing and evaluating your site and understanding exactly what a visitor should do once they arrive is imperative. Your website is the hub of your business and likely the process of optimizing your website will lead to changes in your site structure and visitor interaction.

Q: During our chat you referred to SEO is a "lost leader"...can you expand on that?

A: I love hearing from clients or prospects that say "I just had my website optimized for \$299.00" ... really? The natural question is "optimized for what?" ... And the result ... you get the "stare" ... because in reality they don't know what has happened if anything.

SEO is expensive, takes time and your

SEO partner needs to really understand your business. Optimizing your site for specific industry related keywords and key phrases is what will really lead to effective search results both organically and when using PPC.

Our advice and recommendation on any initial meeting is to provide an Internet Health type report, which outlines the basic statistics on your website. Additionally, install Google Analytics tracking and start to provide a bi-weekly or monthly report on your website traffic. Our next recommendation is to implement a Google ad words program. Adwords is the best process to start to understand the basics of your digital program, i.e. who is arriving at your site, and what they are looking for when they get there.

If you don't understand these basics, then SEO is either wasted or in the alternative misguided. Certainly, don't spend any time or money on those quick fix optimizers.

Q: Is optimizing a mobile site different than a regular website?

A: Your mobile site is or likely should be a different site and as such requires different processes in all areas. Google is just beginning to develop and differentiate between a standard mobile phone and smart phones and tablets. Mobile search is just beginning to take shape and many advertisers have yet to master their websites and landing pages. Mobile is another avenue and not for all marketers.

Mobile search and therefore, mobile optimization are much more focused on local; pages need to be about phone number, location, ordering and reviews. In mobile search, inbound links are marginalized and search is evolving.

Optimizing mobile sites must be different, as the expectations of the users are different. Your mobile site should be focused based on local, especially at this time. At this point in time location and local search are the most significant issues impacting mobile sites. Keep in mind for many advertisers mobile has yet to become a factor in their digital progression.

Q: How does social fit into this mix?

A: Social media is very big space; we count the big five for business as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Slide Share. That being said, Google+ can't be overlooked long term.

Our view of social is that it is a pointer, or driver to your website (being the hub of your business). Social has it's role in brand building - maintaining a presence, interaction, visibility and conversation

► Continued on page 23



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Variable data integration – taking you wherever you want to go

By Dave Ward

Imagine for a moment that you run a 1,000-acre soybean operation in Southern Ontario. With all of the daily chores done, you sit back, put your feet up and start leafing through your favourite agricultural magazine.

You skim the first article and read a bit farther into the next. Then, as you flip on to page 9, something jumps out at you. There's a postcard there, die cut to look like sack of seeds—and it has your name on it. Intrigued, you peel the card off the display ad to which it was affixed. When you turn it over, you find recommendations for three soybean seed varieties that are best suited to your farming operation just north of Stratford. You're a bit stunned. Seeing your name on a postcard inside of a magazine is one thing, but with five different heat zones across the province, how could they possibly know which seed varieties would be best suited to your farm?

This is the power of Variable Data Integration (VDI).

The evolution of VDI

Primitive forms of VDI have been around since the 70's, when large mainframe computers were being used to merge client

information to generate contracts and reports. Of course, back then everything was printed in upper case, so the product wasn't all that attractive, but we were still merging variable data with common text.

With the advent of word processors and the desktop computer, personalized documents became much warmer. Laser printers gave us a crisper character quality and we were able to break free of the upper-case-dominated world of the mainframes—mixed case was far more appropriate for most correspondence. We were also able to build many of our own databases, adding whatever fields we felt best suited our applications (this did open the door for a number of data challenges).

Today, with the maturity of digital print, we have seen yet another shift in the evolution of VDI. It's no longer just a matter of personalization—but of personal tailoring. Through cost-effective marriages of full colour variable print with clean, strategic data, we can now deliver robust, highly targeted messages that don't look like highly targeted messages.

Before continuing, I want to note that what follows will focus primarily on VDI within the world of digital print. However, much of what is discussed regarding data

and targeting is certainly also relevant for electronic communications.

Data is still the all-important foundation

There is no doubt that when you combine your creativity and ingenuity with today's powerful tools, the sky is pretty much the limit. Before you start ramping up VDI projects, however, there is one major component that you need to take a good, hard look at: your data. It simply cannot be taken for granted, as bad data can quickly undermine your entire campaign. Simply put, in order for VDI to work for you:

- you must have the right data in the right fields
- data must be properly and consistently formatted
- data must be accurate
- data must be useable in all of the required contexts

You must also take the time to analyze the data to ensure the acceptability and correctness of all substitutions. I cannot stress the importance of this type of analysis enough. Most people believe that their data is "okay", because a) they may not have much personal experience with the data and/or b) they may not know what

type of anomalies to look for. Worse yet, some people believe that data is "okay" simply because a client or someone in a position of authority tells them it is. The bottom line is that data always has to be scrutinized – even if you have used a prior version of the same file before.

Case Study: PRO Seeds Die Cut Card

The example mentioned in the opening paragraph was from an actual project that we worked on a few months back on behalf of PRO Seeds. Competition for acres is fierce in Ontario's soybean industry and PRO Seeds, while known for premium IP soybeans, made up just under 4% of acres planted in 2011. Up against some of the big multinationals with huge marketing budgets, they recognized success relied on their ability to get focused and break through the clutter.

So they turned to a VDI concept initiated by Jan Kelley Marketing and the Ontario Grain Farmer magazine, with Jan Kelley Marketing providing the creative. Our roles included the required data and programming services, coordinating the printing of the cards and in-house assembly and mailing services.

The response has been excellent. In

addition to direct feedback from farmers in support of the custom messages and recommendations, PRO Seeds experienced a lift in sales in regions where they had little penetration prior to the ad running.

So let's take a look at what helped make this VDI campaign so successful.

Planning and execution

A well-planned variable data project should run very smoothly. The first step is simply a matter of ensuring that all criteria and associated deliverables are succinctly defined at the outset. To summarize, the requirements for the project at hand at were to:

- be able to identify the heat zone by using the postal code
- correlate three seed varieties and associated data for each heat zone and print the appropriate data on the back of each card
- set up a personalized string using the first name(s) and last name on the front of the card
- set up a personalized string using only the first name(s) on the back of the card
- match the printed card to the name and

► Continued on page 15



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VDI/1:1

Variable data printing drives higher engagement

VDP technology makes it easier to reach your target audience and develop loyal, long-term relationships



By Steve Connor

There's no doubt that reaching consumers in today's Information Age requires new techniques – and a major shift from mass marketing to direct marketing has

occurred. It used to be sufficient to advertise your business anywhere and everywhere, hoping that people would notice you and that your hard work would pay off. But actually, this “spray and pray” method of marketing made us move away from personal interactions and is no longer effective – people today expect one-to-one communications. Why? They are simply bombarded by information, so they tune out the messages that are not relevant to them and their specific interests. Taking into account not only what consumers want, but also providing it at the precise moment when they want it, can lead to greater brand awareness and sales.

Although this type of individual attention seems a daunting task in today's fast-paced, digital environment, it is possible and even practical to scale this business wisdom and efficiently apply it to the masses. Because in addition to broadcast media, technology and other channels now exist (i.e. digital printing, email, Internet, mobile, social media, variable data and cross-media software, data mining, analytics, etc.) that enable you to engage in ongoing, one-to-one communications with each of your customers.

Take variable data printing (VDP) for example. VDP, as defined by worldwide document technology strategy and consulting firm, InfoTrends, is a form of on-demand digital printing that produces customized or personalized documents targeted to an individual. Within a single document design, elements such as text, graphics, and images are changed from one printed page to the next based on recipient information from a database.

Many print service providers (PSPs) are providing some

type of VDP service and have been for quite a while. It is not something new, but it has come a long way. A VDP solution from a leading software provider like XMPie, allows PSPs to work with familiar design tools and file formats, and utilize simple data files, to incorporate all the demographic, geographic, and psychographic information they know about their customers (i.e. name, address, occupation, age, gender, interests, hobbies, spending habits, etc.) into their direct mail campaigns in clever, relevant ways that get noticed. InfoTrends research and existing case studies confirm that doing so yields higher margins, creates new revenue streams, and drives more volume to digital presses.

But what's even more exciting to consider is that more and more PSPs are extending their personalization knowledge and capabilities to other channels, such as websites, email and mobile messaging. The key is to start with what you know and grow from there. Clearly, you need to have a foundation in VDP before jumping into the more advanced cross-media capabilities. But if you realize that this is where you need to go, and are willing to make the right investments in technology, people, and possibly partnerships or acquisitions, there are few limitations on what you can sell and deliver to customers.

Case in point

Orangedoor Direct is one dynamic creative company that understands the power of one-to-one communications strategies. Based in Calgary, Alberta, the subsidiary of West Canadian Digital Imaging Inc. serves clients such as Arctic Spas, First Calgary Savings, and Chrysler Dodge Jeep with a goal of meeting their needs with cross-media solutions that have measurable results and give them a competitive advantage.

Orangedoor also specializes in marketing and fundraising campaigns for nonprofit organizations. One such direct marketing campaign was sent to SAIT Polytechnic Alumni with the objective of increasing donations to the SAIT Opportunities Fund. Existing donors were targeted with a personalized direct mail piece. Variable information included name, year graduated, and the program they graduated from, which also determined the SAIT World Skills competitor that was featured on the mailer. The mailer also included a personalized URL (PURL) that led each recipient to their own personal website where they could donate online and order a personalized desk calendar.

Both the direct mail pieces and calendars incorporated eye-catching personalized imagery made possible with XMPie ulmage, a plug-in to Adobe Photoshop and an included add-on to Orangedoor's XMPie PersonalEffect software platform, which was used to drive the entire 1:1 campaign. And the mailers were printed with unprecedented quality and clarity on Orangedoor's Xerox DocuColor 8000 Digital Press. The individualized campaign resulted in a 7.5% response rate, and drove a strong income of donations. Each donor also received a personalized follow-up thank you mailer to foster loyalty and repeat donations.

SAIT Polytechnic was extremely satisfied with Orangedoor's

work and the results of the campaign. The institute, located in Calgary, Alberta, offering courses in advanced technologies and industries, previously relied on mass marketing and advertising campaigns, and even sent calendars to their entire database of prospective donors in the past. This approach was both blind and costly, as SAIT had no way of knowing the effectiveness of their efforts. But after attending one of Orangedoor Direct's annual direct marketing seminars, where Orangedoor demonstrated the effectiveness of 1:1 multichannel marketing by showcasing their own efforts, SAIT realized that it could save time and money with a targeted, personalized strategy. That's when Orangedoor stepped in, adapted SAIT's existing creative to make it variable, leveraged their alumni data, and executed their first successful fundraising campaign for the institute.

Further proof of VDP's merit

Orangedoor Direct created and executed a similar personalized direct marketing campaign for Athabasca University, who was also looking to increase donations by alumni and current students. The university, which prides itself on being Canada's leader in online and distance education, hadn't done a lot of fundraising outreach for quite some time, so it sent out a RFP to service providers and agencies in the surrounding territories. Athabasca University chose Orangedoor Direct because it was the only company that brought something new to the table – exceptional creativity and advanced technology that would enable a relevant, 1:1 approach.

Using a detailed listing of the targeted audience members that included each student and alumni's name, year graduated, program graduated, and gender, Orangedoor was able to create a series of three variable direct mail pieces. Each piece educated the students and alumni about the various needs of Athabasca University and the funds that have been developed to sustain the university going forward. Orangedoor once again used personalized imagery to capture Athabasca's audience's attention, XMPie software to drive the variable components, and Xerox equipment to produce the printed pieces.

The mailers also drove recipients to a personalized website where they could securely donate to the fund of their choice. Although this integration of online technology was fitting for most of Athabasca's current students, Orangedoor discovered that some of the target audience was more likely to respond via a printed return mail piece. This behind-the-scenes view into campaign performance was made possible with XMPie's analytics technology. Tim Flaman, vice president of Marketing & Online Business Solutions at West Canadian Digital Imaging Inc., says it's this flexible technology that allowed Orangedoor to be nimble, and tweak and refine the campaign on-the-fly for better marketing results – results that Flaman says were very positive and once again secured future business for Orangedoor at Athabasca University.

Steve Connor is Vice President of Marketing at Xerox Canada. He can be reached at steve.connor@xerox.com

Taking into account not only what consumers want, but also providing it at the precise moment when they want it, can lead to greater brand awareness and sales.

► **Continued from cover**
initiatives, there are essentially no costs to participating. The program runs itself and other than a PayPal account, no resources are required.
On average, a charity receives approximately \$6,500 in donations over a one-month period. Donations range from \$1 to \$25 and every time an eBay buyer makes a purchase, they're prompted to make a donation. Give at Checkout is successful because it makes it easy for consumers to give – it's like standing in the grocery store checkout line with your wallet in your hand. Adding a few extra dollars to your bill is a small commitment

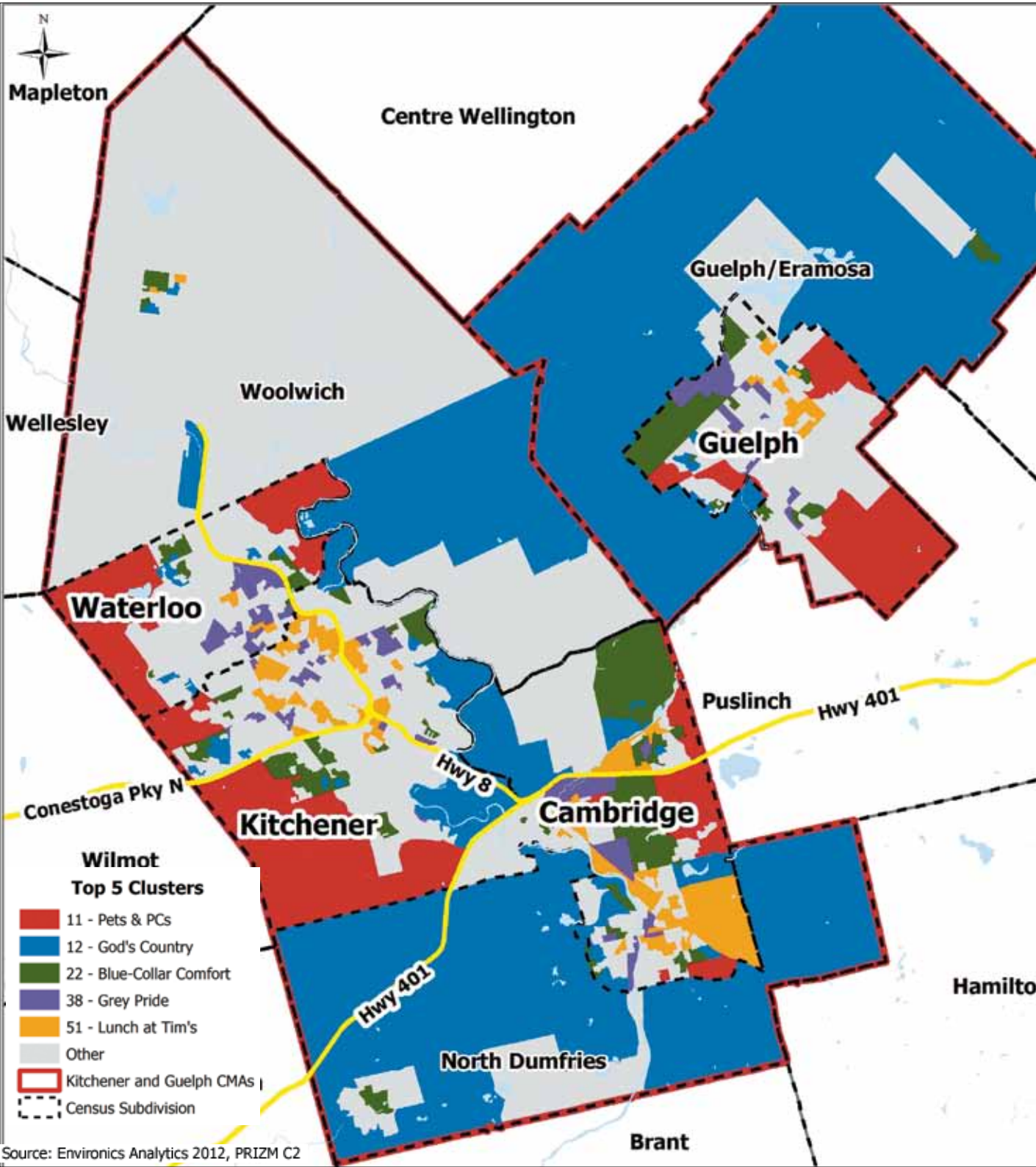
that can have a big impact.
Taking the donation at checkout online is just one example of how fundraisers are taking advantage of Canadians' use of the Internet and their adoption of e-commerce. Another fundraising tactic that is being re-invented is the silent auction. Non-profit organizations like Shania Twain's Shania Kids Can have used online auctions to raise funds by selling one-of-a-kind and hard-to-find items. Last year, Canadians had the opportunity to bid on a pair of shoes that Shania wore to the 2011 CMT Music Awards. The shoes were autographed by the singer and worn during an infamous slip and fall during the

awards show.
eBay's charity auctions feature blue and yellow virtual ribbons that make it easy for non-profit sellers and buyers to identify items that support a good cause. These online auctions make it easier, faster, and in some cases more profitable to host auctions to raise funds. Donors can bid on items from the comfort of their home or the convenience of their mobile phone and they can be halfway around the world when they place their bid. Non-profits no longer have to stretch their fundraising resources to host lavish dinners or receptions to accompany a silent auction that is only accessible by a local group of buyers.

eBay is also helping non-profit organizations in times of crisis when the power of online fundraising becomes most evident. The speed and ease of online donations make it easy for consumers to give back, immediately. In the immediate aftermath of the Haiti earthquake in 2010, more than 575,000 eBay community members (in the U.S.) donated more than \$2.1 million in just four weeks.
In 2011, eBay enabled a record amount of socially conscious commerce. eBay buyers and sellers in North America and the U.K. donated approximately \$120 a minute to charitable causes, totalling approximately \$63 million in support.

Fundraisers don't need to look further than the monetization of social media, the growth of online shopping, and the power of micro-financing to understand the new, online realities. When it comes to giving in the digital age, it's important for non-profit organizations to provide Canadians with online options for making a donation, big or small.
.....
Kevin Wolfley is the Community Relations Manager for eBay Canada and is responsible for overseeing the Giving Works program on eBay.ca. For more information on eBay Giving Works, please visit www.eBaygivingworks.ca.

REGIONAL REPORT: Canada's Technology Triangle



Fergus Post Office



Kitchener at night



Cambridge industrial area



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This month we continue our popular Regional Report series with stops in Cambridge, Guelph, Waterloo and Kitchener

First stop, Cambridge (pop. 130,000)

The economy of Cambridge has experienced strong growth over the past decade in both output and employment. Its population is predicted to grow from its current 130,000 to 173,000 by 2029. A growing population means a growing business sector and that's good news for

Frank Mosey at TStone Mailing.

"There's really nice mix of big and small businesses here," he says. "It's a wide variety of companies in the area doing a lot of communications."

Mosey actually lives in Kitchener but chose Cambridge for his business because of the availability of space.

"I needed a certain type of space and in K-W the available buildings were either really big or really small. Here I got the square footage I needed and was able to put a loading dock out back."

Proximity to Highway 401, two minutes to be exact, was another deciding factor for Mosey, who needed a location that was easily accessible for the large number of trucks coming and going from TStone on a daily basis.

Although he says the local DM market is fantastic, most of TStone's customers are stateside – places like Texas, Kentucky, St. Louis and Maine.

But make no mistake, Mosey is 100 per cent committed to Cambridge.

"We run a business here but we're also part of the community," he says. "On a personal level I do a lot of volunteer work with local charities."

Mosey also gives back from a business standpoint. From March to June (his busiest season), TStone offers all fundraising clients a 35 per cent discount on all of their mailings.

"I can't donate to every local charity, it's just not possible," he says. "So this is my way of giving back."

Then we went to Guelph (pop. 114,000)

A multitude of commercial, industrial and service organizations as well as a number of government and educational facilities make up the city's economic community. From world leaders in advanced manufacturing to innovative agri-food start-ups, Guelph is host to a variety of successful enterprises and boasts a skilled labour force of over 275,000 people.

"In general, there is a lack of digital marketing talent out there," says Geoff Linton, Vice President of Inbox Marketer. "But the talent pool for marketing and technology is right here in Guelph – right at the edge of Canada's technology triangle – and that's why we're here."

He says having access to existing talent,

Guelph businesses also have first pick of the future talent coming out of the local universities and colleges.

"We believe this really gives us a competitive advantage," says Linton.

But the talent in Guelph isn't all on the technical side. The city has also become known as a bit of a Mecca for independent artists of all kinds.

"When it came time for the bricks and mortar side of our business to grow we came to Guelph because there's really a sense of creative focus here which is largely channelled by the amount of arts and culture associates here," says Brent Klassen, partner at Blue North Strategies, a full service creative agency serving the not for profit sector. In fact, Blue North shares a building with a local Jazz Festival association.

"Where our location can sometimes be a challenge is in talent acquisition," he says. "We aren't drawing from a big pond like Toronto so when it comes time to add a new member to the team we have to work harder to find the right person."

"Nevertheless, we're struck time and time again by how much talent exists in the Kitchen/Waterloo, Cambridge, Guelph triangle. I think a lot of that has come about because as the high-tech industry grew here, a creative services sector sprung up to support it and that's where we find our talent."

Klassen says that he doesn't feel that Blue North has had to make any compromises in the type or level of talent that they have and says that he would stack their people up against the big Toronto agencies any day of the week.

Most of Blue North's clients are actually in the United States and they have two satellite offices on California which allows them to service those clients more effectively. But their Guelph office is still their main creative and production hub.

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Headquarters of Research In Motion



University of Guelph Faculty of Science

In addition to local clients like Sunlife, Manulife and The Co-operators, Inbox Marketer also has clients spread out across the country and in the U.S. but unlike Blue North, they have no offices down south.

"We're kind of location agnostic," says Linton. "We can operate from anywhere. In Guelph we're able to own multiple buildings so we can keep our costs under control and can also scale as needed without having to take out long term leases."

In terms of meeting out of town clients, Linton says it's no big deal. Guelph is only a short drive from the GTA and minutes from the local airport.

"And at the end of the day our staff can get home in about 10 minutes," he says. A benefit that keeps their employee retention rate up over 90 per cent.

Throw in a side-trip to Fergus (pop. 19,126)

About 30 minutes outside of Guelph is Fergus – home of the Highland Games, the Scottish Festival and Highland Marketing. With a population of just over 19,000, Fergus might not pop to mind when you're thinking about unique direct mail solutions but Dave Ward has been happily delivering just that for his clients since 1993.

Highland specializes in innovative, attention-grabbing die cut pieces of mail that get their clients noticed. And they certainly practice what they preach – a life-sized die cut piper sign adorns the front of their office and tells you you've arrived at the home of Highland Marketing.

Ward and his team recently moved the business back to Fergus after being located in Guelph for a number of years. And although they have some competition in the Guelph/Cambridge area, Ward says that his team's unique approach to each and every piece has been the key to Highland's success.

"The benefit of being unique is that it protects your position in the marketplace," he says. "We have some extraordinary talent working here and it's allowed us to develop our services into a one-stop shop for our clients."

From this quiet, quaint town, the team at Highland Marketing are creating custom mail pieces for clients all over Ontario and other parts of Canada. Most of their work is comprised of large pharmaceutical companies in the GTA, although they do support some smaller businesses in the K-W area. They also have a number of

local agriculture-based clients. But within Fergus Ward says that the economy of scale of dealing with what are mostly small businesses makes it difficult win business.

"The local businesses see what we're sending out and want to do it but when it comes down to it, the cost of producing as little as 500 die cut pieces just too expensive for them. So what we do is really not cost efficient for most of our local businesses. So even though I live in Fergus and I love Fergus, most of our business comes from elsewhere."

Final stop... K-W (pop. 317,933 combined)

Known around the world as a high-tech hub, the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo also support a strong direct marketing industry. To get a feel for how things are done in this area we stopped at three very different, yet highly complimentary DM suppliers – a printer, a creative agency and a cloud software provider.

Direction Printing & Communications started as a communications company in 1995 but over the last three years has shifted their focus to the printing side and added design and mail services to their roster of product offerings.

"We found that more of our clients wanted to use direct mail," says Shannon

Forrest, Sales & Marketing for Direction. "Businesses here are expanding and the market is getting saturated so direct mail is a great way for companies to break through and have top of mind awareness."

Although only 35 per cent of their business is in the K-W area, Direction has never felt the need to move or even expand their offices into the GTA or east.

"We can service all of our customers from here," says Tom Anderl, Manager at Direction Printing & Communications. "We're basically within two hours of any of our customers so we can look after our own backyard fairly easily."

"Also, the lower cost of doing business here verses the GTA means we can pass savings on to our customers."

Forrest says she's finding a lot of new business enquiries are coming in from companies looking to relocate, expand or start-up in the K-W area.

"The area is really growing," she says, "and that can only lead to more business potential."

That business potential is what has been drawing start-ups to the K-W area in recent years. K-W has become a real hot spot for new business, thanks in part to the education and academia that resides in the area.

"There are a number of associations of

technology leaders and innovators that exist here and combined with academia this gives K-W world-class appeal," says Andrew Dixon, VP of Marketing and Operations for IGLOO Software, one of the area's start-up success stories.

IGLOO began back in 2008 and has been growing their licensed revenue by leaps and bounds ever since. With offices in the United States and Europe, this company of 50 staff has been on a tear – with no signs of slowing down.

"People in this area are thinking five to ten years down the road. By being able to tap into these associations as well as academia, we are able to innovate ourselves and anticipate trends," says Dixon.

It also attracts recruiters from global companies like Microsoft who come to K-W in search of top talent and provides great recruiting opportunities for local companies as well.

IGLOO does face some unique challenges though. As one of the only companies in Canada who does what they do, most of their competition comes from U.S. companies located in Silicone Valley.

"Just because of where they are situated, these companies are receiving a lot of attention and buzz from the media as well as a lot more financing," says Dixon. "That

gives them a step up on us so we have to try harder. That being said, we compete and win against them."

The talent pool in K-W is not limited to the technology sector however. As Barefoot Creative discovered when they set up shop here in 1999, the design programs at Conestoga College and the marketing programs at University of Waterloo and Wilfred Laurier are providing a great resource in their own backyard.

"Aside from the local talent pool we're also finding that established agency people who have started their careers in Toronto are happy to relocate to K-W to start their families," says Gayle Goossen, Partner at Barefoot Creative. "It's a very desired community to live in because of the growth and innovation happening as well as a housing market that is still way below that of the GTA."

Barefoot has a mix of local clients that range from small NFPs to large companies like RIM and Sunlife; and national and International companies in the U.S. and Ireland.

"We're willing to go where the clients want us to go," says Goossen, "but we chose K-W for our offices because, well, I live here but also because it's a good central location that allows us to easily see clients in Burlington, London and Toronto."

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In the InBox

Dell Canada offers IT Heroes the chance to shine

Web-based campaign encourages everyone to sign a National IT Day petition to celebrate and recognize the efforts of all IT professionals across Canada

By Amy Bostock

Want to show some love to your tireless IT department - you know, the guys and gals who keep your tech running smoothly and answer your panicked call for help when your email is down or you can't access the server?

In 2010 the folks at Dell Canada and Intel Canada decided to step up and start a petition to have a recognized National IT Day every November.

"We wanted to put something together to help them (IT departments) get recognized for the important work they do," says David Gair, Director of Marketing at Dell Canada, "so we started the National IT Day campaign to petition the government to have one day of the year officially recognized as National IT Day."

Dell was also looking to strengthen the connection the company had with marketers on the IT side.

The online campaign was built around the concept of "IT Heroes". IT professionals were asked to post stories on a website chronicling how they helped someone within their organization with an IT crisis.

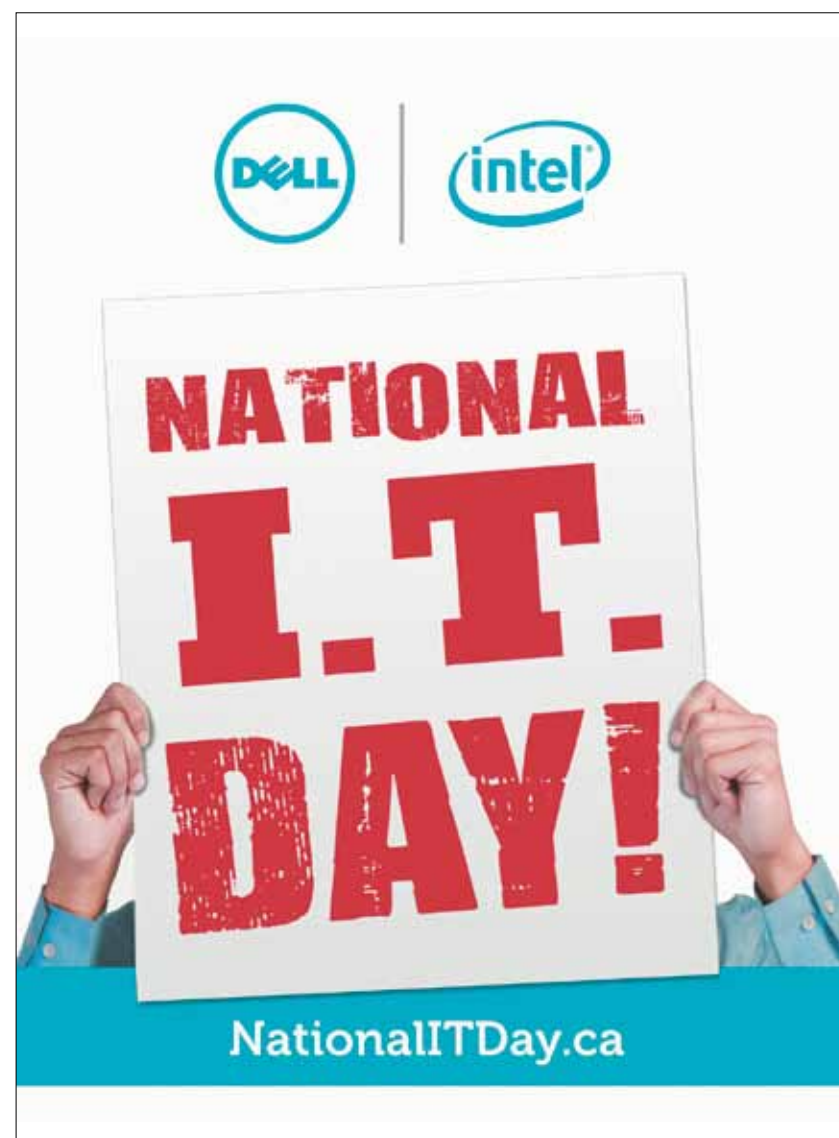
"Once we launched the website, we had a callout on social media as well as on our Dell.ca site," says Gair. "The idea was that by having their peers able to vote on the best stories, it would drive interest and engagement."

They also ran contests promoting the campaign,

The goal of the campaign was to collect the 10,000 signatures needed to have the day official recognized. Dell also added a fundraising component, donated \$1,000 to their charity of choice for every 1,000 signatures over 4,000.

To date the campaign has collected 7,209 signatures on the petition for a National IT Day and raised \$3,000 for reboot Canada, a non-profit organization providing computer hardware, training and technical support to charities, non-profits and people with limited access to technology.

This campaign was a bit outside of the normal scope



of Dell's usual marketing efforts and presented some unique challenges.

"For one, the IT Heroes contest had to be seen as fair," says Gair, "so we left it up to folks on social media sites to vote and choose the winners. To do that required a certain degree of policing on our part."

Dell Canada enlisted the help of Markham-based PGE Propel to put systems in place to do that.

"We try very hard to be innovative (at Dell) and digital is a big part of what we do," says Gair. "We chose PGE Propel because we were really impressed with their creativity and

the success they'd had with digital campaigns. It was a collaboration but we couldn't have pulled it off without them."

Integrating social media into the National IT Day campaign effectively passed control over to the audience, a tactic that Gair says worked in Dell's favour.

"The great thing about allowing people to vote on something is that they become invested in the results," says Gair. "This really helped the campaign build momentum very quickly."

The campaign is still ongoing and signatures continue to pour in. Dell has even launched a series

Name of program:
National IT Day

Client:
Dell Canada

Agency:
PGE Propel

of National IT Day greeting cards that you can send to your favourite techie the first Wednesday of November.

For more information on National IT Day visit the website at www.nationalitday.ca

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E: ddrey@marcusevansch.com

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- *Continued from page 9*
- address block and container/bundle sequence code on the corresponding magazine
- open the magazine to page 9 and position the matched card on top of the Pro Seed display ad via a glue dot

The creative

There were actually two layers of creative on this project. First, there was the display ad inside the magazine and secondly, there was the die cut card itself.

As you can see, the design of the card was simple and clean, featuring a die cut burlap sack—the type you might traditionally find on a farm. The overall size was kept to about 5" X 7", which helped maximize the number of cards that could be printed and cut out of a sheet of card stock.

While the front of the card had only a single substitution, there were actually 10 substitutions on the back, 9 of which were used to indicate which soybean seeds were best suited for the particular farm, along with the associated attributes for each variety. There was also an unobtrusive control field that was used to match the card to the appropriate magazine.

Identifying the data sources

One of the most important tasks on VDI projects is to look at all of the required outputs and then work back to determine

if a) they are readily available on file or b) they have to be calculated or derived from another source. On this project, most of the name data was readily available, although there were a few contingencies that had to be accounted for. The heat zone data and associated seed varieties proved to be a bit more complex, but a bit of custom programming was able to resolve this.

Setting up the greeting and name substitutions

For this project, a combination of the greeting name together with the last name was suitable for most of the name substitutions on the front of the cards. The greeting name was also useable for all but a few of the substitutions on the back.

As the name on the front was in upper case, there was a potential challenge with some of the longer name strings (such as ABRAHAM & ALEXANDRA SCHWARTZENTRUBER). In these few cases, the team decided to substitute the word "YOUR" for the name. This worked out well, as the effected cards read "SEEDS SELECTED FOR YOUR FIELD", which still maintained a bit of a personal touch.

Interestingly, even though it appeared that there would be ample space for the greeting on the back of the card, a few longer greetings such as "Abraham, Alexandra, Elizabeth & Christopher" still proved to be a challenge. Again, in these

cases a generic fallback was used.

Setting up the heat zone data

As the data file did not contain any heat zone information, one of the requirements was to develop a system through which the heat zone could be derived from the postal code. To accomplish this, grid lines were plotted for the different heat zones so that they could be correlated to longitude and latitude. From there, the postal codes were linked to intersect points on the heat zone maps.

The foregoing did require some custom programming, along with extensive unit and acceptance testing to ensure that postal code data consistently returned the correct heat zones. All of the testing went very well.

Keeping things in order

As you may be aware, most publications mail is prepared via an LCP (Letter Carrier Presort) sort. This results in a sorted mailing stream where the pieces are sequenced by containers and bundles within containers, for shipment to various delivery and sorting stations.

As the personalized cards in this example had to match up with specific magazines, it meant that the cards would have to be printed in the same sequence as the magazines. Therefore, the sort was run first and the sorted file was used to produce the variably printed cards.

I would also like to note that, as the weight of the finished piece is required to run the LCP sort, we used a mock up consisting of the same stock and number of pages in the magazine to determine the weight. This allowed us to continue with the printing of the die cut cards prior to the arrival of the magazines.

QA-ing the process

Ongoing quality assurance (QA) is a prerequisite for these types of projects and was also a key ingredient in the success of the PRO Seeds campaign. QA procedures required ensuring that all workstations were set up correctly and that there was a go-to sample that everyone had access to.

At the outset, each worker's pieces were checked to ensure that all matching and assembly tasks were being performed as per the sample. Following the initial QA, continual spot-checking at each workstation was used to ensure that the same work standards were being applied throughout the course of the assembly and mail preparation.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that VDI is a powerful tool that allows us to do some remarkable things, and the PRO Seeds card is really only one example of what can be done to tailor insightful messages for your customers. Still, I believe that all successful VDI projects

will have the following common elements:

- advertisers who want unique, leading-edge marketing pieces
- agencies who recognize and understand the full scope of what can be done with these new technologies, and how effective these direct marketing pieces can be
- teams that are prepared to look at all of the proposed data substitutions, scrutinize the data to account for all eventualities and offer viable solutions where alternatives may be required

Like so many other endeavors, the success of any VDI project is as much in the details of the execution as it is in the creativity that inspired it. As I mentioned, I've had a few conversations with associates who had a great VDI concept that fell apart because of bad data, an incomplete analysis or poor QA processes.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Careful planning and an experienced team can help turn your creative concept into a true VDI success that will help take you wherever you want to go, from the hustle and bustle of our major urban centers to that 1,000-acre farm just north of Stratford. Where will it be taking you?

Dave Ward is President of Highland Marketing, a full service direct marketing company that specializes in multiple channels of direct communication, including die cuts, social media and product sampling. Dave can be reach at dward@hiland.com or 1-800-422-1309.

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InTheMail

NAME OF PROGRAM:

2011 Ford Fiesta Launch Campaign

CLIENT:

Ford of Canada

AGENCY: WUNDERMAN

Production: Kelly Gray
Creative: Stephan Schmelzer, Sarah Anderson, Roman Solomon
Account Management: Meghan Shaw
Studio: Ian Gordon

INFORMATION

PACKAGING:

Andrew MacEachern
Allison Robertson



The little car that could

Fiesta slider campaign drives Ford to the top of the B-car category

By Amy Bostock

When Ford decided to throw down in the highly competitive B-car (sub-compact) segment of the Canadian market, they turned to long-time agency partner Wunderman to create an aggressive, multi-channel campaign that would launch the new 2011 Fiesta to the top of its class.

“The campaign had to not only be very aggressive but it had to tell a value story,” says Stephan Schmelzer, Creative Group Head and Art Director on the project. “We were competing with three very established players (Toyota Yaris, Honda Fit and Nissan Versa) in a category that Ford had not previously had a presence.”

A drive down memory lane

A little background on the car - Ford used to sell the Fiesta in North America, 30 years ago. The mission for the very first Fiesta was fuel economy and fun. However, shifting priorities in North America sent this ‘little car that could’ away for an exclusive European run. Over time, it established itself as a sales leader across Europe and beyond. The sixth-generation Fiesta that launched in Europe in 2009 took the Fiesta mission to a higher and more sophisticated level. 2010 was the year Ford would bring the Fiesta back to North America. Urbanites across Canada were going to get their new car experience disrupted by this “Killer B” of the B-car (sub-compact) segment. With a budget of \$300,000 and a list of urban prospects, Ford set out to launch its contender for the small car leadership crown.

This campaign presented a few distinct marketing

“Enter the three pillars: design, technology and performance. Feature after feature, each panel clearly shows how the Fiesta delivers the whole deal.”

- challenges for Ford:
- The all-new Fiesta was sharing the dealer floor with the outgoing, close-out Ford Focus (an all-new Focus was arriving in Spring 2011.)
 - European cars that are adapted to the North American market often lose some of their unique qualities in order to comply with North American standards—handling dynamics, feature set and performance. (This wasn’t the case for Fiesta.)
 - Quebec—a key market for the Fiesta—embraces the B-car segment. However, Ford has always struggled to gain ground in Quebec and thus had high hopes for its European-inspired Fiesta.
 - “With this campaign we were focusing on the Quebec market because of Ford’s existing European platform,” says Schmelzer. “Quebec was really the key to all of this so we had to break through this market.”
 - Communication and sales objectives were aggressive. Ford set out to generate incremental sales and re-establish itself as a major player in the small car market.

The campaign

Before the Fiesta was even debuted in North America, Ford sent out eight Fiestas to tour major Canadian cities, arriving at events. A series of emails built the buzz, provided contest opportunities, Fiesta news and generated 84,000 leads (73,500 were net new leads for Ford).

Building on all of the excitement surrounding the new Fiesta, the direct mail and email portions of the campaign then kicked in to capitalize on the news and on the in-market communication. Fiesta wasn’t being marketed as just a small car - to the target market (30 to 45 year-old urban hipsters) “Fiesta was the vehicle for creating extraordinary moments”.

But Wunderman still knew that in order to grab attention in such a crowded market, their marketing pieces had to stand out. So a slide-out in an oversized format was created that would instantly let the reader know what the Fiesta offered. With the competition pushed out of the picture, the reader was greeted by a rundown of features and head-to-head comparison chart.

“Enter the three pillars: design, technology and

performance. Feature after feature, each panel clearly shows how the Fiesta delivers the whole deal,” says Schmelzer.

Working alongside Information Packaging, Wunderman created a printed piece that complemented the email and web components of the campaign. But it was not without its challenges.

“The uniqueness of the Ford slide/sleeve lies in the automation in the final finishing stages for this interactive design,” says Andrew MacEachern of Information Packaging. “It is unique as the structural design has the ability to merge two concepts together to reveal the hidden panels underneath.”

“The production challenge from our standpoint was to maintain the solution as an automated design due to volume and time line to market while at the same time being able to have multiple personalized panels within the piece that was done in the letter shop stage before induction.”

In June 2010, a one-time mailing of 101,000 pieces was sent out across the country with selected prospects offered a \$500 purchase or lease offer.

“To tie up the message, both the email and the direct mail offered the reader the opportunity to buy,” said Schmelzer.

Award-winning results

Thanks to aggressive campaign tactics, the Ford Fiesta earned a top three finish in a category where previously Ford did not even have a top-10 car. The Fiesta became their number one selling car domestically and boasted \$1 million in incremental sales.

“The ROI for this campaign was 224 per cent,” says Schmelzer, “and that’s really good, especially given that margins are small on this car.”

The campaign also won Wunderman and Information Packaging industry recognition, taking home the 2011 NAMMU Award for Best Addressed Admail: Business to Consumer in the Automotive Category.

“As a side note, the Fiesta was chosen as AJAC’s Small Car of the Year for 2010,” says Schmelzer. “As far as sales are concerned, year-to-date North American sales put the Fiesta in the top 3 in the category. That’s quite a feat, given that historically Ford has not been a serious contender in the class.”

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Direct & Personal

by Billy Sharma



Fran Brown Warrior Mother

She runs a charity that can be a challenge but a great opportunity for many of you readers.

That's right, I usually talk about the person but this time I would like to tell you about a great cause that Fran Brown runs. It's called the Lisa Brown Foundation in memory of her late daughter.

If you are as touched by what she is struggling to do all alone as I was, perhaps you can help in some capacity.

To help you understand what Fran Brown does and why she does it, here's my conversation with her:

Me: Fran, I know you have helped a lot of charities. Why do you do it?

Fran Brown: It was the 1940s, the depression years. I remember at four years of age, sitting on the top steps in our house listening to my father's conversation. He was a struggling lawyer who would often have clients come to our home in the evening, so as not to disrupt their day jobs. At times, a husband and wife would come to see him. What I didn't understand then was that these couples wanted a divorce. After they talked with my father he would say, "I want you to kiss and make up." I liked this part best of all.

They would thank him for his time and ask, "What do we owe you?" His answer would always be the same, "You don't owe me anything; just be happy and love each other."

Most of these people were farmers. They would often bring a bushel of apples or some other type of produce to our house to show their gratitude.

My mother was a devoted, stay at home Mom. She would use some produce for her own cooking, but gave most of it away to our neighbours. We lived in a neighbourhood consisting of all nationalities and religions, where people supported each other.

My parents were paying it forward. I learned at an early age that kindness goes a long way in helping others.

Me: I know you have travelled all over the world, to some pretty remote places. How did that start?

Fran Brown: At nineteen I met my future husband, my quiet hero. My mother asked him, "Where are you planning to go for your honeymoon?" His answer was Africa. "You're taking my daughter where?" she exclaimed. So, Africa was put on hold for the time being.

We eventually did go to Africa. It was our first of many exciting destinations.

Our travels have taken us to every continent and many countries: New Guinea, Antarctica, Patagonia, Amazon, Easter Island and Bhutan. Bhutan is a tiny kingdom in the Himalayas known as the last Shangri-la. The people there have a saying, "Happiness is our gross national product." Visiting this magnificent country was a memorable experience.

People often ask us, "Why do you visit such primitive places?" I tell them that the countries and the people we visit are not primitive. The elderly are revered and material belongings are not worshiped, unlike our own country.

As the years went by wanderlust more firmly set in. My husband and I decided rather than buying material things that were not necessary, we would spend our money on travel. And so the travelling began in earnest and has continued for over fifty years.

Me: Tell me a bit about your family?

Fran Brown: We were blessed with two beautiful children—our son Paul and then our daughter Lisa.

When the children were young I did as much

I promised myself never to be silent, never to hide the truth. I promised to be the voice Lisa didn't have. I am an ordinary mother trying to make a difference.

volunteer work as time would allow—helping children and giving them a chance at a better life. I took courses to help those with cerebral palsy learn to communicate with the "bliss symbols". Eventually I became a Rotarian, helping with many different causes. When the children entered high school, I started my own art glass business by importing museum quality glass art from artists around the world.

Tragically, on October 14, 2004 our lives changed forever. Our beloved daughter Lisa died by suicide at the age of 41.

There is no greater loss than the loss of a child. At Lisa's funeral service I asked the clergy to acknowledge Lisa's final act along with her beautiful life. I was determined to bring depression out of the shadows.

Lisa was special, always putting others' needs before her own. But sadly, she kept her own need for help a closely guarded secret. It was only after her death that we discovered she had suffered from severe depression. Lisa hid her illness from everyone. She suffered alone and in silence, ashamed of being depressed and fearful of being stigmatized. The prejudices are never ending. Those suffering with depression are stigmatized; Psychiatrists are stigmatized, and those left behind are stigmatized.

Society's silence on the subject of depression is deafening. Depression is a secret, best not kept.

I remembered Lisa's words of encouragement, on many occasions she would say, "Mom, I'm so proud of you!" I then realized I still wanted her to be proud of me. And I desperately wanted to be proud of myself.

I have come to realize that the most meaningful tribute to Lisa is how I live my life.

I want to turn this tragedy into a force of change and not let Lisa's life be in vain. I promised myself never to be silent, never to hide the truth. I promised to be the voice Lisa didn't have. I am an ordinary mother trying to make a difference.

We often ask ourselves, how could this tragedy have happened to us as a close family? The truth is depression does not discriminate. One in five of us in our lifetimes will suffer from mental illness, the most prevalent being depression. We feel that the greatest barrier to the treatment of depression is social prejudice. As a result, fifty per cent of those who need help will not get help.

After Lisa died some friends stayed away. I felt hurt and abandoned.

Sadly, all too often we turn away from the bereaved. As a result, the bereaved become isolated from the very human contact they need.

Most people worry about saying the wrong thing, and as a result they say and do nothing at all.

All that is required is a hug, a touch and to listen: these little things mean so much.

I'm grateful to all those wonderful people who have been and still are a constant source of support; I don't know what I would have done without them.

As the weeks became months, I not only missed Lisa beyond all comprehension, but I also missed myself, the self I knew so well.

I'd often ask, "Who am I, who have I become?"

I feel tired, confused and broken. Do I have the strength to start all over again? Do I want to start over again?

How do I go on without Lisa; how do I go on without hope?

Where in all the darkness will the hope come from?

Being a mother with a passion, or as some refer to me as "a mother warrior," I wanted the stigma surrounding depression to vanish today. I wanted to shout, "Now is the time!"

"I will be the voice Lisa didn't have.

"I will speak for those who still have battles yet to fight.

"I will conquer the stigma surrounding depression and other mental health issues."

Shortly after Lisa died I wrote the words, "If I could, I would have changed the world I brought you to, if I only could." Well now I was ready to change the world, I was ready to fight. I even took boxing lessons to help me prepare for the fight of my life.

I admit; I've been blessed with just enough foolishness to believe that I can make a difference.

I'm often asked, "Is it difficult for you to speak out; how do you maintain your hope?"

The truth is, speaking about my loss is difficult. But it is the hope that motivates me.

I speak because I want to encourage others to talk openly about depression so the stigma can be conquered. I am speaking out for prevention.

I've found myself reflecting on what it was that led me to speak out in the first place

It is hope. Hope that when ordinary people come together they can achieve extraordinary things.

That something better awaits us if we have the courage to reach for it, to work for it, and to fight for it.

Depression and the silence this topic evokes are two of society's last taboos.

Regrettably, we live in a culture where we not only deny depression we also deny sadness. Sadness is a real and legitimate emotion. But it is perceived by society as a sign of weakness. Sadness that cannot be shared cannot be overcome!

As I searched for the answers, I decided, I would do my best to inform and educate, and so my journey of healing began.

We will never hug our daughter again, but together we can help a friend, a relative or even a child.

Six months after Lisa died I contacted the various newspapers, radio and TV stations for their cooperation, to help me gain awareness for depression. I was relentless! Our endeavours have been featured in the K-W Record, Grand Magazine, Toronto Star, CTV, CBC and Rogers.

My husband and I have made a commitment. When we lost Lisa, we pledged to do our utmost to conquer the stigma surrounding mental health issues; we will not allow the stigma to conquer us. We believe, standing on the sidelines is not an option. We hope our efforts will lead to a healthier society where depression will be comfortably talked about. A society where it is understood, that depression is an illness, not a weakness. And a society where those who need help will feel safe to seek the help they require, without the fear of being stigmatized.

We have established a family run charity the Lisa Brown Foundation. With a vision for a future—a future where no one will suffer with depression in isolation as Lisa did. And a future where this problem will not be passed on to the next generation.

Our mission for the Foundation is to promote the awareness of depression through education, by speaking out and reaching out. A few of our achievements have been:

► *Continued on page 23*

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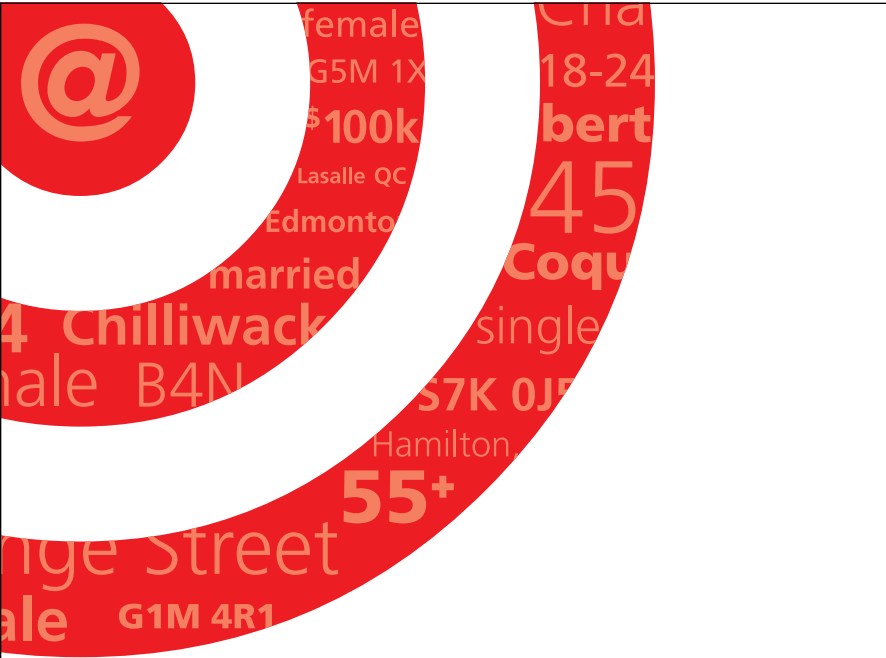
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► Continued from page 8

which can take place on your social networks ... our exclusively developed social media marketing program builds out opt-in email addresses as well as builds both Facebook LIKES and Twitter FOLLOWERS.

As with SEO, every marketing program needs to define objectives, set goals and work towards a desired or specific outcome. SMO is not just about changes to your website, but content (yes, back to content), submitting relevant content and/ or links to your websites content are critical to managing your social media marketing.

Social Media Marketing is personal so keep in mind that you need to ensure you have someone who is a true fan, a loyal follower and more importantly you require someone in the planning phase that really understands your business.

Social Media is a two way street, it's a conversation. There has to be some specific and tangible value to your friends, LIKES and followers. Social Media Marketing is a long-term process as well; similar to SEO, results take time. One friend or fan at a time is the goal. Don't count on your program going viral. It's our recommendation that the word "viral" shouldn't even be considered as a viable option.

As with all good marketing your social needs to be unique, different and memorable.

One of the larger decisions is determining which social networks are best suited to your product, service and brand. Our recommendation - stick to the basics when starting your social media-marketing program. Facebook with Instagram and Google with YouTube are pretty sure bets for the foreseeable future.

Michael Bickerton is a founding partner at JBM Interactive Ltd. He's a graduate of the CMA's Emarketing Program and also a certified Google Adwords and Analytics Partner. He can be reached at mjbickerton@jbmltd.com

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- Speaking publicly to students, teachers, parents and mental health professionals;
- Subsidizing the cost for adolescents with emotional and behavioral problems to attend a therapeutic summer camp;
- Sponsoring an annual community butterfly release to raise awareness for suicide prevention.

The monarch butterfly has become a symbol of hope for the Foundation, including the phrase, "Let's talk about depression; courage gives us wings to fly."

I believe that courage and the support of others gives us wings to fly.

Me: So there you have it—a challenge and an opportunity to help this tiny foundation get off its feet and soar. Write to Fran Brown at: Lisa Brown Foundation, 189 Mohawk Avenue, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 2T4

Billy Sharma is president and creative director of Designers Inc. He can be reached via email at designersinc@sympatico.ca or by telephone at: 416. 203. 9787

Worth Knowing

The Lowe-Martin Group acquires Dollco Integrated Print Solutions

The Lowe-Martin Group, Canada's premier print and communications services provider since 1908, has acquired Dollco Integrated Print Solutions, a highly-regarded and successful publications and product marketing specialist based in Ottawa. The acquisition adds Dollco's experience and market reach to The Lowe-Martin Group's award-winning suite of print-related offerings.

Dollco, which has been in business since 1918 and owned by the Nicholds family since 1956, will operate as a division of the Lowe-Martin Group, specializing in publication and web printing. Kevin Nicholds, the President of Dollco, will assume the title of President and oversee the new division. He will be responsible for guiding The Lowe-Martin Group's growth in the publication and web printing markets, and will play a key role in the development of Lowe-Martin's marketing and business development strategies.

"Dollco has a well-earned reputation as a high-quality, customer-focused print and communications supplier," said Ward Griffin, CEO of The Lowe-Martin Group. "The Nicholds family has contributed a great deal to our industry and our community, so it is a pleasure for me to welcome Kevin Nicholds to our executive team. Dollco's staff has worked hard to develop the company's reputation for excellence."

Mr. Griffin was enthusiastic about the Lowe-Martin Group's prospects for the future. "Our vision is to help our customers succeed by improving the quality of their communications and reducing their overall cost of doing business. With this acquisition, we can continue to deliver the highest-quality products at any run length. The synergies between our companies provide new opportunities for product development and enhanced levels of customer service. Our customers can be confident that they can rely on us for many years to come."

Aeroplan launches Destination Miles

Aeroplan, Canada's premier coalition loyalty program announced that it is introducing Destination Miles, a new service exclusive to Aeroplan Members and operated by its affiliate Destination Miles Booking Service Inc., that will allow members to use cash to book hotel stays, car rentals and vacation packages online or by phone through the Destination Miles Travel Desk. In addition, members will be able to earn miles for every purchase by booking through Destination Miles. In celebration of the launch, members can earn 3 miles for every \$1 spent for a limited time.

"This new initiative is excellent news for our members as now members can use their Aeroplan Miles for a flight and purchase a hotel stay, car rental or vacation package at the same time," said David Klein, Vice President, Marketing & Innovation, Aeroplan. "With Destination Miles, our group proposes a unique offering in the world of travel which will give Aeroplan Members more choice and flexibility when making their travel arrangements."

The launch marks continued momentum for Aeroplan in its ongoing efforts to increase

member satisfaction and engagement and is an additional foothold as Aeroplan continues its commitment to enhance and broaden the reach of the program.

"This new service will further strengthen and bring value to Aeroplan's growing roster of travel partners by providing new communication channels, targeted marketing opportunities and renewed opportunities to leverage member travel insights to increase their overall market share," Klein added.

To develop and implement this new service, Destination Miles Booking Service Inc. worked with Aimia, and its Proprietary Loyalty Services group in Canada to develop Destination Miles as well as to provide the IT applications and infrastructure and the agent training needed.

Destination Miles Booking Service Inc. holds a travel agent license issued by the president of the Office de la protection du consommateur and is an affiliate of Aeroplan Canada Inc.

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**May 22, 2012
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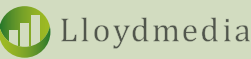
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