



introducing  
BBR~~X~~

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While it may be true that pharmaceutical advertising works in an environment that imposes strict rules and regulations, it doesn't mean that creativity is looked upon as an afterthought, or even worse, stifled altogether. Far from it. After all, the target audience - healthcare professionals - are consumers as well.

In order to reach them effectively, it's critical to not only understand the changing advertising playing field, but to also align brevity and strategy with inspiration and innovation. That is our position—to be an agent of change and add colour to a traditionally conservative marketplace.

# an interview with its managing partner Michel Yezina



## How long have you been doing this?

I have had the privilege of working in the pharmaceutical industry for 28 years now and time does fly when you're having fun! Passion drives our industry and I have known and worked with some of the most passionate individuals in the business.

Like many people, I started out as a pharmaceutical representative, and spent six exciting years building relationships with healthcare professionals. My goal was to make a difference in the way my physicians treated their patients, to ultimately improve their quality of life. That belief still holds true for me today and contributes to the way we currently manage both people and brands at BBRx.

## What did you want to be growing up?

I've always been interested in the military and military strategy in particular. Growing up with a dad in the armed forces helped reinforce that idea. I missed out on an opportunity of getting into the Royal Military College because I was only 16 at the time, so I headed off to the University of New Brunswick, where I received my Bachelor of Business Administration. The rest is history.

## Do you have children?

Yes, I have three great kids, all teenagers now. When I was product manager, I would use my experience with my children to motivate representatives. Children have a great imagination and, as some of you may be aware, never take no for an answer. They are fearless and are willing to try anything to get what they want—the perfect salesperson profile. I believe most representatives from the Marion Merrell-Dow days grew up knowing my kids.

### What do you think of advertising in general in the pharma industry?

I think we are doing not too badly considering that we are faced with some of the strictest regulations governing pharmaceuticals in the world. However, as a client once told me, we can take a page out of the European model to see just how innovative pharmaceutical advertising can be and this is one of the reasons why I believe the creative at BBRx has been so successful.

### What has been your best shot in the business?

We have developed some very successful campaigns in the past, but if I were to pick one, I would choose the agency's current HIV campaign. We have been blessed with a client that shares the same passion as we do—that advertising should be about real people. Enough with the smiley faces already, and let physicians see the real patient and the real life problems they face and the solutions our brands can bring.



We are fortunate that all our clients are passionate about what they do and I'm sure you will see some superb campaigns in the very near future.

### Why BBRx?

The agency prior to BBRx was known as Cadence Healthcare. Up until two years ago, Cadence was modeled in much the same way as other agencies. At that point, we decided to adopt a "Board of Directors" approach. We put together a core team responsible for the brand and brought in the required expertise for each project. Not only is this model effective but also brings substantial savings to our clients.

Last year we were looking for a partner that could take us even further. We had a well defined vision of who we were and wanted to partner with a bigger organization which shared this vision.

We considered many organizations and then in early February of this year, I met with Sebastien Fauré, president of bleublancrouge. Finally, we found an agency on the same page in terms of our business philosophy and the importance of great creative. In fact, BBR was awarded Quebec's highest advertising honours this past year.



#### Who do you have as current BBRx clients?

We currently have three major clients, namely Bristol-Myers Squibb, Schering-Plough Canada and Teva Neuroscience. These clients account for more than 10 pharma brands at BBRx.

The key to successful campaigns is to capture the impact our brands have on “Real People’s” lives.

#### How do you work with creative people and far-out designers?

I think the key is to work with them. Our account team is there to stimulate their thinking and keep their ideas on strategy. We do not “play” art director—that is their expertise. We are very fortunate because our creative teams are constantly striving to improve their product and challenge themselves. There’s no magic formula—it all comes down to mutual respect, hard work and good relationships.

#### What are your short term objectives?

Our existing clients remain our priority; providing them with the best service as well as creative and strategic ideas. Now, thanks to our merger with BBR, we would like to help our clients go one step further and explore new channels of communication which are now readily available to us in-house.

#### And longer term?

In the longer term, we hope to grow with our existing clients and reach out to those companies interested in working with us.....

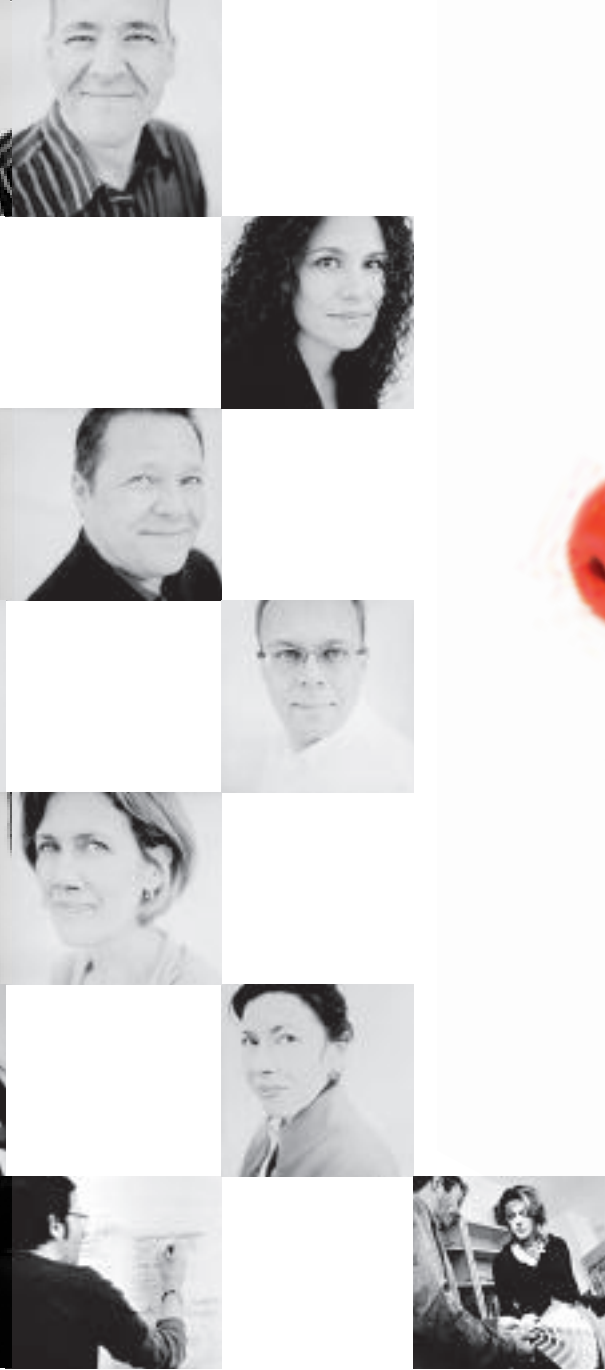
#### What type of people work with you?

We hire experienced and mature individuals who work well under pressure, are professional, love what they do and are dedicated to the success of the brand.

#### Permanent staff vs. Freelance?

Two years ago, we made a conscious decision to hire the best freelance creative and copywriting talent that this city has to offer. Each of our freelancers is assigned a brand which gives them a feeling of ownership and makes them truly feel part of a team effort. This has proven quite successful for us. Why? Traditionally, agencies have in-house writers and in my experience, this leads to overextension of resources and ultimately, burnout. Using several freelancers on different brands adds colour, perspective, keeps the work fresh and spirited. We currently have a bank of six freelance copywriters and two creative directors assigned to our various brands.





if you want to add some colour to  
your campaigns or would like to  
change things, we would like to hear from you.

(514) 875-7007

