

MARKETING

This article provided courtesy of Marketing Magazine.

[MONTREAL SELLS ITSELF AS GLOBAL 'LAB' FOR NEW ADVERTISING STRATEGIES]

August 25, 2009 | By Canadian Press | [Comments](#)

Recommend

Montreal's advertising industry is poised to launch an international effort that could shape how consumers are courted.

A consortium of advertisers will set out to encourage U.S. companies to use the city as a multilingual, multi-ethnic petri dish for firms seeking a cheap way to test their international campaigns.

Long in the works, the **Association of Quebec Advertising Agencies** will announce details Tuesday of trade missions to next month's prestigious New York Advertising Week, and to Chicago in November.

Sébastien Fauré, the association's chairman and president of Montreal agency **BleuBlancRouge**, said Montreal is an ideal testing ground because its different cultural influences have produced advertising styles that would be considered groundbreaking in other markets.

For example, the Quebec auto insurance board is well known for graphic depictions of car accidents that illustrate the dangers of speeding. Stand-up comedians regularly help peddle everything from cars to donuts.

The project named **Yul-Lab**—a moniker derived from the three-letter airport code for Montreal—will also help companies use emerging platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

"We truly believe that Montreal could be the innovation centre of global brand teams in the world," said Fauré, one of the driving forces behind the project.

Advertising agencies are grappling with revolutions in technology and new platforms such as social media, which have prompted drastic changes in the business.

"Consumers are in control so, basically, we need to learn how to talk to those consumers in the way they want now," Fauré said.

Montreal is the perfect place to figure that out, he argues, because it has a large talent pool that mixes a "Latin spirit with American business sense."

"A chief marketing officer's average [employment] life is around 18 months," he said. "They need to come up with great solutions. They cannot look in the past to find the solutions of the new world."

"Facebook, social media, Twitter, event marketing, TIVO—all those things are challenging the decisions they have been making for the last 10 years. They need to find a place where some people can actually experiment."

Long ago dethroned as the financial capital of Canada, Montreal could use a jolt to its economy. Advertisers argue their industry already plays a leading role.

The association's president, **Yanik Deschenes**, said the advertising industry in Quebec already generates 60,000 direct and indirect jobs and \$5.2 billion in economic activity—and he's hoping to add to that.

Lilian Tomovich, vice-president for brand marketing at MasterCard Worldwide in Toronto, said her company has already had a successful experience in 2006 test-marketing its Priceless.com program in Montreal.

"I think it's an interesting idea and, for us in particular, it happened to work quite well," she said. "I can see that there would be some great benefits for other brand marketers and marketing folks."

Tom Wright, of Toronto's Level 5 brand strategy firm, said Yul-Lab "is a great approach."

"I've worked for global brands headquartered in Europe and headquartered in the United States and Montreal is a very, very unique laboratory," said Wright, whose firm is participating in Yul-Lab.

"In many ways if you look at the Montreal market as a petri dish for the world for experimenting and developing these new brand and creative strategies, I think it's a perfect location."

Copyright: "Copyright 2008. Marketingmag.ca All Rights Reserved"

[Close](#)

This story can be found at:

http://marketingmag.ca/english/news/agency/article.jsp?content=20090825_144102_8560