

Cassies 2007 Cases

Brand/Case: Quebec Road Safety Year

Winner: Events, Seasonal and Short-Term—Gold

Client Credits: La Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ)

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Crossover Notes: All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. David Rutherford has been identifying these as Crossover Notes since Cassies 1997. The full set for Cassies 2007 can be downloaded from the Case Library section at www.cassies.ca

Crossover Note 9. Turnarounds
Crossover Note 18. Keeping it Simple.
Crossover Note 23. Problem versus Solution.
Crossover Note 24. Tough Topics.

To see creative, go to the Case Library Index and click on the additional links beside the case.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

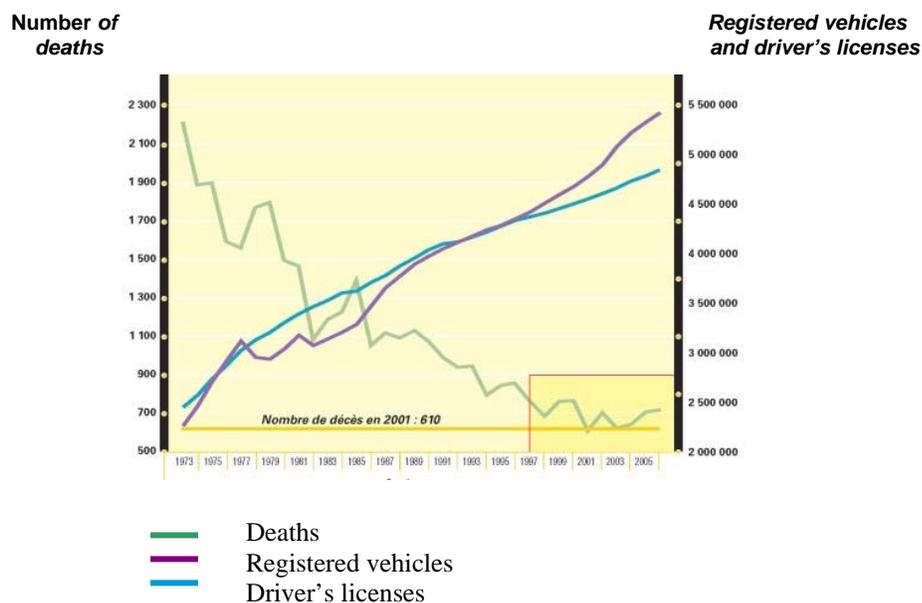
Business Results Period (Consecutive Months): March–April 2007
Start of Advertising/Communication Effort: February 2007
Base Period for Comparison: Historical trends

After six consecutive years of increasing numbers of victims on Quebec’s roads, the Government of Quebec decreed 2007 as Road Safety Year in order to raise awareness among Quebecers about the province’s poor road safety record and reduce the number of accident victims. [Crossover Note 24](#).

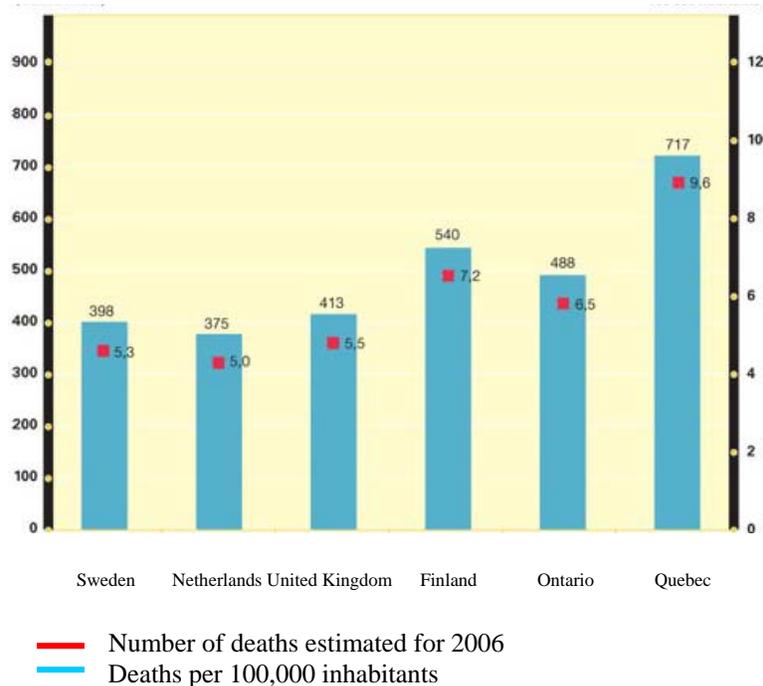
Lowering the number of motor vehicle accident victims in Quebec is a major challenge. Why? Because automobile use in Quebec represents an ideal of individual liberty, free from community concerns. Because there is no social consensus against speeding. Because, despite a social consensus against drunk driving, 40% of all drivers say they have driven their vehicles after consuming alcohol. Because the media makes traffic accidents seem a part of everyday life. Because drivers tend to play down their own behaviour and consider others to be “the problem.” But most of all because the numbers of licensed drivers *and* registered motor vehicles continue to grow. Despite these obstacles, after two months of the campaign in 2007, several indicators show encouraging signs – even signs of a turnaround. [Crossover Note 9](#).

SITUATION ANALYSIS

The estimated cost of unsafe behaviour on Quebec roads is about \$4 billion a year. As a public insurance company, the Société de l’assurance automobile du Québec has an obligation to reduce its costs through a road safety and accident prevention program. Quebec saw 2, 209 deaths and 2.3 million vehicles on the road in 1973, as against 717 deaths and over 5.4 million registered vehicles in 2006. However, accident figures have been trending upward since 2001.



Furthermore, the number of motor vehicle deaths has remained proportionally higher in Quebec than in other areas.



In the light of these figures, it was an urgent matter for Quebec to correct the situation.

To this end, the SAAQ launched Phase 1 of its 2007 campaign in February with a media buy of \$1.1 million (net) for the first three months of the year covering the entire Province of Quebec.

STRATEGY & INSIGHT

The majority of accidents are not due to chance or hazard. In fact the behaviour of motor vehicle users is responsible for more than 80% of accidents. What this means is that in 80% of all cases the accident could have been prevented. However, drivers have a tendency to lay the blame on others, while making light of their own deficient behaviour.

This trivialization of dangerous behaviour is widespread. Exceeding speed limits is commonplace in Quebec. Forty percent admit to getting behind the wheel after consuming alcohol. Even though 97% say they are against drunk driving, and driving while impaired remains the primary cause of motor vehicle deaths. Poor attention, bad habits and a false sense of complacency are all the source of motor vehicle tragedies.

Given this trivialization, the major challenge for the campaign is one of **inclusion**. To build social consensus on a broad and solid basis among Quebecers, so that drivers feel they are part of the problem – and therefore part of the solution. **Crossover Note 18.**

In this context, making road safety a major public issue became the primary objective.

Secondary objectives were to make the current figures on accident victims unacceptable in the eyes of the public, and raise motor vehicle user awareness about the consequences of motor vehicle accidents (physical, social, economic and much more). And, to make drivers feel they're responsible for their own behaviour on the road – in other words, urge them to obey the Highway Safety Code.

The resulting communications strategy centred on four elements:

- Show the extent of the problem in Quebec: the number of victims affected, and other serious consequences of motor vehicle accidents. **Crossover Note 23.**
- Show that what most of us consider ordinary driver behaviour on the road is all too often the cause of accidents.
- Show that the majority of drivers indulge in dangerous behaviour.
- Urge drivers to change their behaviour and actively support road safety.

CREATIVE EXECUTION

A 60-second shock TV commercial exploited the four elements above and became the main message in the campaign.

We see a violent and fatal car crash caused by unsafe behaviour. The impact on the driver's family showed the full extent of the consequences. Finally, a police officer at the crash scene explains how seemingly ordinary behaviour is the main cause of accidents, which can be avoided by obeying the Highway Safety Code.



MEDIA EXECUTION

An initial **high-impact plan** used TV for 5 weeks between February 5 and March 11 on conventional and specialty channels – for a total of 1,600 GRPs. A **frequency plan** then ran from March 12 to April 8, exclusively on specialty channels. We also had 1,450 GRPs of radio in Montreal's anglophone market, between February 5 and March 11.

RESULTS

There was a spectacular drop in lives lost in March 2007, when the campaign reached optimum distribution. This was followed by another significant drop in April.

Number of Deaths on Quebec Roads (SAAQ)

<i>Month of Accident</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>Difference %</i>
March	55	28	- 49.1%
April	61	46	- 24.6 %

The campaign stands out clearly, relative to this change in behaviour. Presented with the affirmation, “After seeing this ad, you have personally adopted better driving habits,” 60% of respondents answered Yes. At the same time, nearly two-thirds of respondents who had seen the TV message (64%) said that they had been motivated to be more careful about obeying traffic signals (41% agreed, 23% agreed somewhat).

Léger Marketing’s post-campaign survey also revealed that the need for *driver responsibility* has been enhanced. According to 61% of Quebecers surveyed, drivers in Quebec are generally “not very” or “not at all” careful on the road. This represents a major gain over the pre-campaign survey, where only 55% said “not very” or “not at all.”

On another level, one of the campaign’s objectives was to make road safety a serious social issue. According to the Laboratoire d’analyse de presse Caisse Chartier, the number of published articles or broadcast reports devoted to road safety **increased 440%** between February and April 2007. The SAAQ has found that the majority of editorial writers wrote favourably about its communications activities as well.

CAUSE AND EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

The results are obviously due to multiple factors. However, indices converge to show that the campaign has played a determining role.

Regarding the major drop in deaths in March and April 2007, the Léger survey confirms that the television is breaking through. In fact, 93% of respondents, when asked, agreed that the campaign made them think about the consequences of an accident. What’s more, the majority of people who saw the TV (90%) agreed that it led them to think about the risk of killing or injuring someone (69% agreed completely, 21% agreed somewhat).

Regarding the advertising’s effectiveness in raising awareness about the dangers and consequences of bad driving habits, the majority were convinced. In fact, 90% of the people who saw the advertising believed it was effective. And 98% believed the message was clear (74% agreed completely, 24% agreed somewhat).

As well, 96% found the advertising convincing (75% agreed completely, 21% agreed somewhat), and 97% found it “quite realistic” or “very realistic.” Realism is, of course, one of the ingredients for success in public service advertising based on shock value.

INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2007

[For Quebec Road Safety]

Each year I update these Crossover Notes. If you've read this cover note before, you can skip it. If not, it's worth a quick read.

My career started with a seven year sentence in brand management at Procter & Gamble. Then I clambered up the ladder at O&M, becoming President and later Vice Chairman, all of this in Toronto. Then I set up as a consultant.

P&G and O&M were passionate about "lessons learned" from advertising effort, and so was I. All the Cassies cases have great lessons in them, though at the pace we work today these lessons are not necessarily easy to find.

I was thinking about this as I was editing Cassies 1997, and I had the idea for Crossover Notes. They started as bite-sized footnotes pointing out lessons that "cross over" from one case to another. Then, as time had gone by, they've evolved to what we have today.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they weren't designed as a crash course in advertising, they are worth reading as a whole. You can also dip into them selectively. The headings on the next page will help you choose.

I've tried to be even-handed on controversial issues, but here and there you will sense my point of view. For this I thank the Cassies for not editing their Editor.

We now have close to 200 published cases. And I hope I've helped pass some of the learning on.

David Rutherford

Toronto: January 2008.

For more on brand-building see *Excellence in Brand Communication*—by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum. See also *Vulcans. Earthlings and Marketing ROI*, commissioned by the ICA, and published by Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

See www.ica.adbeast.com.

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The Notes for this case are marked ✓ and come next.

Note: Cassies uses “advertising” in its broad sense. It not only stands for advertising through the main media of broadcast, print, out of home etc. Where appropriate, it also stands for Direct Marketing, PR, Interactive Marketing, Buzz Marketing, Event Marketing, Product Placement etc.

QUEBEC ROAD SAFETY CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2007

9. Turnarounds. There are a number of these in the Cassies:

Cassies I, II, III, 99

- Crispy Crunch. Molson Canadian.
- Pepsi. Quebec. Listerine. Quebec.
- Oh Hungry? Oh Henry. Dove. "Litmus."
- Molson Canadian. "I AM."
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese.
- becel. "Young at Heart" Eggs. Wonder Bread
- Sunlight. "Go Ahead. Get Dirty."

Cassies 2001 and 2002

- Kraft Dinner.
- Lipton Chicken Noodle
- BMO Quebec.
- Campbell's Soup. Listerine.
- CFL. Pro•Line.
- Easter Seals Relay.
- Sleeman Quebec.

Cassies 2003

- Aero. Bait Cars.
- Crown Diamond Paint.
- Dodge SX 2.0. Motrin.
- Pro•Line. Super 7.
- Université de Montréal.
- VodKice.

Cassies 2004

- Cottonelle.
- Gaz Metro.
- Kit Kat.
- Milk (Quebec and Prairies).
- Toyota Sienna.

Cassies 2005

- Crescendo.
- Energizer Lithium.
- Toyota Tacoma.
- Eggo French Toast Stix.
- Twix. Hubba Bubba. Juicy Fruit.
- Coricidin II.
- Moores and Harvey's.
- Quebec Lotto 6/49.
- Pepsi – Quebec and Quebec Milk.

Cassies 2006

- Gatorade. Eterna.
- Wonderbread
- Couche Tard
- Grolsch
- Rickard's
- Trident

18. Keeping it Simple. We've all been to a presentation that was so complicated that nothing registered. In other words, we know that KISS works. But when it comes time to approve a creative strategy a lot of people get overtaken by the urge to cram everything in. This has to be resisted. P&G say that you have to "feel the pain of leaving things out." Trout & Ries give similar advice.

Scott Bedbury (of Nike and Starbucks, and himself a client) blames clients for the habit. He points out that it's hard to see what's wrong with adding another benefit or copy point. I can add from personal experience that the agency advice to leave things out unfortunately does not have much traction against a client who says, "let's leave it in." A pity.

There's a sub-set of this problem when a brand has an emotional benefit *and* a rational claim. Examples are (1) Philly in Cassies III with "permission to indulge" and "60% less fat." (2) Scotiabank in Cassies 2002, wanting to sell individual services while improving overall image (3) Campbell's Soup in Cassies 2002, wanting to modernize its image, while getting nutrition facts across.

This is where expectations have to be realistic. The more points there are, the lower the impact of each. This is where experienced research companies can help. They have evidence about the trade-offs involved.

The points so far have been at the Creative Strategy level, but the execution should also be simple—or, said better, *simple for the audience to take in*.¹ The danger is that we know what we are trying to say, and so may not realize that an ad is unclear. I've also seen directors complicate commercials, in an effort to make them more interesting. Overall, though, virtually all Cassies advertising is simple.

23. Problem versus Solution. There's a widespread idea that advertising works better when it is positive—reflecting a mental model that advertising should spend more time on the solution than the problem. But this can be challenged:

- Quebec's "Buckle Up" campaign in Cassies I.
- The campaign against Quebec's Medical Bill 120 in Cassies I.
- The Heart and Stroke campaign in Cassies I.
- Oxfam Canada in Cassies II.
- Buckley's in Cassies III.
- Dove Litmus in Cassies III. (Most of the commercial is showing harshness.)
- Big Brothers Vancouver and Ethical Funds in Cassies 99.
- Sunlight in Cassies 99. (Most of the commercial is spent on getting dirty.)
- Erectile Difficulties in Cassies 2002.
- SAAQ anti-speeding in Cassies 2002.
- Bait Cars in Cassies 2003.
- Familiprix in Cassies 2003.
- Motrin in Cassies 2003.
- Elections Ontario in Cassies 2004.
- The "Stupid" campaign in Cassies 2005. Also the United Way.
- Moores in Cassies 2005.
- SAAQ, Gay Lea and Avion in Cassies 2007.

Note: When I tell people that Dove Litmus and Sunlight "Get Dirty" spend most of their time on the problem they often disagree, until they re-look at the commercials.

This is why our thinking needs to be re-examined. The issue shouldn't be the *time* that a piece of advertising spends on this or that, but on the *net impression* created.

24. Tough Topics. The Cassies don't have a lot of cases about complex social issues. However, we do have the following:

- Quebec's "Buckle Up" campaign in Cassies I.
- The Heart and Stroke Foundation in Cassies I.
- Oxfam Canada in Cassies II.
- Goodwill Industries in Cassies II and III.
- ABC Literacy in Cassies III.
- Big Brothers Vancouver in Cassies 99.
- Erectile Difficulties in Cassies 2002, and Viagra in Cassies 2003.

¹ Simplicity is not as simple as it used to be. Direct Marketing and Websites relish multiple copy points, provided they have selling power. Also, the "visual landscape" has changed, and people raised on music videos and video games can absorb a plethora of images that leave older baby boomers bewildered. Finally, the notion of "the brand" is often more complex than it was in the days of Volvo = Safety and Tide = Clean.. That said, a piece of communication must still be easy to take in.

- SAAQ anti-speeding in Cassies 2002, and again in 2007.
- Bait Cars and United Way in Cassies 2003.
- Elections Ontario in Cassies 2004.
- The “Stupid” campaign against tobacco in Cassies 2005.
- United Way, Leucan and Run for the Cure in 2005.
- The Pourquoi Commencer campaign in Cassies 2006.

Note: The British and Australian databases have more cases on tough topics.