

# Cassies 2005 Cases

**Brand: Pepsi Brand French**

**Winner: Regional Success—Certificate of Excellence**

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**Crossover Notes:** All winning cases contain lessons that cross over from one case to another. The notes for this case are as follows, and are attached. The full set can be downloaded from the Case Library section at [www.cassies.ca](http://www.cassies.ca)

- Crossover Note 1. What a Brand Stands For.
- Crossover Note 2. Brand Truths.
- Crossover Note 8. Classic Rivalries.
- Crossover Note 9. Turnarounds.
- Crossover Note 10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged.
- Crossover Note 14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.
- Crossover Note 16. When a campaign stumbles.
- Crossover Note 21. Likeability.
- Crossover Note 31. Transcending Advertising.

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):** April 2003 – March 2004.

**Start of Advertising/Communication Effort:** March 2003.

**Base Period for Comparison:** Historical data.

This is a case about well-judged risk. About successfully replacing an iconic advertising property. About finding a fresh new approach that revitalized the brand.

There are few markets more competitive than carbonated soft drinks (CSDs). In addition to the investment in brand-building, it is a price and merchandising- driven category with 61% of all sales sold at a discounted price. It is also a category of constant innovation. Market share is exceptionally hard to win, with share point changes measured in tenths.

There are also few markets in the world where Pepsi has a significantly greater share than Coca Cola. Québec is one of them. By the late 1990s Pepsi's Québec share was almost double Coke's, making the Québec business absolutely critical. **Crossover Note 8.**

Pepsi had been driven to these heights by an 18-year celebrity campaign with Claude Meunier. However, there were signs it was running its course. Pepsi's regular share had declined, and Diet Pepsi was not getting its fair share of the growing diet segment.

This paper examines how tough and risky decisions were made, turning Pepsi's share decline into a +1.5 share points gain—with advertising as the cause. **Crossover Note 9.**

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Claude Meunier had been the face of Pepsi in Québec for 18 years, and had become a cultural icon. **Crossover Note 31.** He had used his down-home Québécois humour to express his love of Pepsi, and he was the perfect spokesperson – no inappropriate home movies on the net, no 24-hour marriages in Las Vegas, no awkward pictures with a can of Coke. A joy to work with, he went above and beyond contractual obligations to support Pepsi publicly. Thanks to Claude, Pepsi had developed deep roots in the Québécois culture, and was the number 1 CSD, with close to a 30% share of the market.

In 2000 Coke launched a new offensive, attacking those deep Québécois cultural roots. Coke increased media spend more than 70% between 1999 and 2000, with a “*Quand C'est OK, c'est COKE*” campaign. It was Coke's first attempt in many years at original French creative, and it garnered quick attention and immediate results. Coke share grew for the first time in years—from 14.2% in 1999 to 14.8% in 2001.

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's Note: In the 80s, Pepsi was number 2 in Québec. Through 1992, Meunier took Pepsi to be the clear number 1, with a 12 share point lead over Coke. This case won the Grand Prix in Cassies I.

Coke's resurgence, plus pressure from other CSDs, began to impact Pepsi. Share dropped from 29.9% in 1999 to 27.4% in 2002. **Crossover Note 16.** Unlike their elders, young Québécois had not grown up with Claude Meunier. Yes, they enjoyed his humour, but they did not have a deep relationship. They were more intrigued by Coke's campaign.

There was an additional concern. With the increased focus on health and wellness, diet beverages were becoming increasingly important in Pepsi-QTG's portfolio. Diet Pepsi was on the march in English Canada, but was not responding in Québec. By 2000 it was not getting its fair share of market, given the overall strength of Pepsi.

In discussion with older Diet Pepsi consumers we heard about their phenomenal bond with Claude Meunier. It made sense. They had grown up with him, remained engaged in his shows and career, and more importantly his humour.

This raised some radical thoughts. Should we abandon Claude on the parent brand? Could he be the magic ingredient for Diet Pepsi? Should we transition Claude off the parent brand and onto Diet Pepsi?

Abandon an 18-year flagship spokesperson? Heresy! And do it in Québec – renowned for its personalities? Treason! **Crossover Note 10.**

Think of Monsieur "B" for Bell or Veronique Cloutier for Suzuki. Consider the failures when strong campaigns have been dropped. Is it coincidence that Sprint weakened without Candice Bergen? Or Wendy's without Dave Thomas? This was not a decision to be taken lightly. But the status quo was not an option.

Claude willingly agreed to focus his efforts on Diet Pepsi. However, his departure would leave a gaping hole on Pepsi itself. This led to two ambitious objectives:

- Find a Pepsi brand campaign with the same magic and resonance as Meunier.
- Turn Pepsi around, and get it growing again.

## **STRATEGY AND INSIGHT**

The first temptation was to replace Claude with another Québécois comedian. However, deep consumer probing revealed that this was a recipe for disaster. Claude could not be replaced. He was too well-loved, too associated with the brand. Any substitution would have invited comparison and realization by the consumer that the replacement could not fill Claude's shoes. **Crossover Notes 1 and 2.**

More importantly, why should the brand that kicks Coke's proverbial butt settle for a second rate solution, when this could be the opportunity to craft something that could really resonate with young Québécois? Something that could not only build on Claude's legacy, but surpass it? Pepsi was too much a part of Québec, and Québec too important to the company, for anything less than the holy grail.

Wherever the solution lay, we had to have a deep understanding of what Claude had brought to the brand, and what Pepsi could bring to the Québec market. We knew that Claude celebrated the idiosyncrasies of Québec life, with the hockey star, the dépanneur (convenience-store) owner, the Montreal rocker, all showing their love of Pepsi. But what gives Pepsi permission to insert itself into Québec life where many other brands had failed? We set up an intensive research plan to answer two questions:

- What does “Québec” mean to teens and young adults?
- What is it about Pepsi’s DNA that makes it resonate with Québécois?

The study used unique and pioneering techniques for Pepsi-QTG:

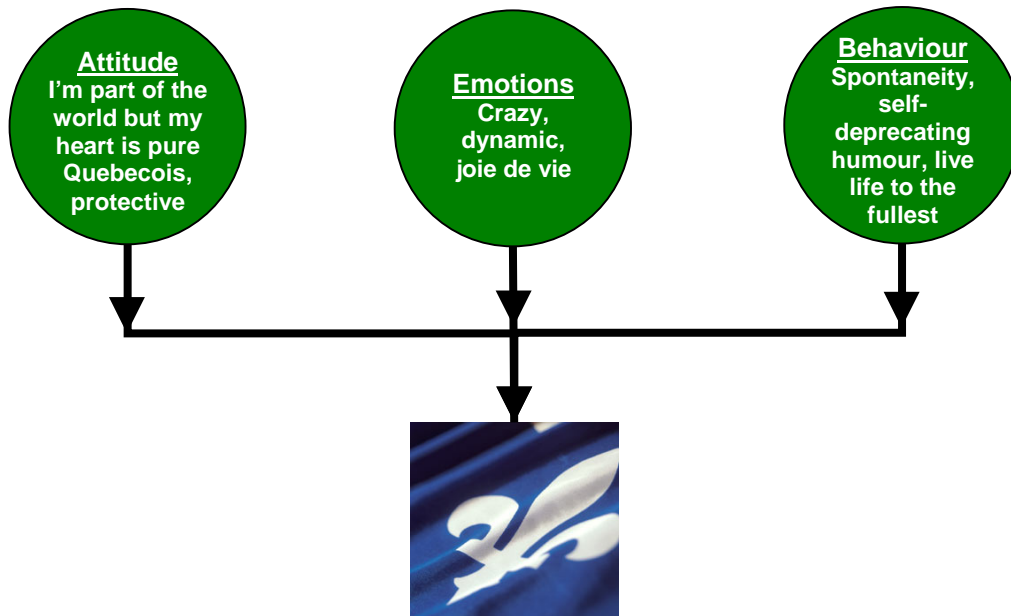
- Photo-journals of consumers lives
- Analysis by a professor of anthropology
- Thought and style leaders groups (no “Dull-Normal” respondents allowed!)
- Competitive and brand user interviews
- Positioning validation
- Three rounds of creative assessment

Two insights emerged:

1. ***My enemy’s enemy is my friend.*** Québécois have always been proud of their cultural successes despite being surrounded (and threatened) by a sea of English-language culture. Québec is the archetypal challenger brand—something Pepsi understands and shares. Pepsi has to live under the big red shadow of Coke (often regardless of brand performance in market), constantly reminded that Coke is the world leader, and the “default” cola choice. Additionally, Coke is the archetypal Anglophone brand. Here was the common bond – two entities constantly under threat from an omni-present, behemoth. Both Québec and Pepsi are scrappy underdogs. The driving force behind Pepsi’s Québec success was Claude’s unique ability to show that Pepsi is a natural companion to Québécois.
2. ***Ménage à trois:*** Many marketers have fallen prey to developing a uni-dimensional definition of what makes Québec different from English Canada—and we almost fell into that trap. We would hear one group define Québécoisness by emotions. Another would use behaviour. Yet others used attitudes. When replayed only one of these definitions respondents told us that our definition was lacking. It is not enough to share the same sense of humour and love of life as the Québécois (you might be Italian). It is not enough to act like a Québécois (you might be a young, passionate Frenchman). It is not even enough to think like a Québécois (you might be from any threatened community).

It was only with all three dimensions that respondents began to nod in agreement. For the creative brief, this became:

*“Pepsi celebrates the emotions, behaviours, and attitudes that define Québec.”*



## EXECUTION

### a) Creative

Months of creative work, with qualitative/quantitative pre-testing, led to the “5 Guys” campaign. They love their life in Québec and the way Pepsi just seems to fit.

They are driven by the need to act, think and feel Québécois. Why five? To represent the letters of the Pepsi name. Each has a name starting with P-E-P-S-I – a fun approach, with additional branding. Importantly, they were not spokesmen, but personifications of the Québécois spirit, giving us the ability to change them as the campaign matured (In fact, all were replaced in 2005).

We rolled out the new campaign in March 2003, balancing two needs:

- Establish the personalities for the five characters, so that people liked them.
- Be clearly about Pepsi—to minimize comparisons to Claude’s work. The five guys had to demonstrate their Québecness, but not overshadow the product story.

We launched “*The Chase*,” “*Parachute*,” and “*Ivon dans la machine*.” Each delivered on the three elements of Québecois-ness. Emotionally, all the guys are a bit crazy/dynamic. Behaviourally, they are spontaneous and self-deprecating. Attitudinally, they reveal their deep protectiveness of Pepsi (metaphorically protecting Québec). However, none of the executions scream Québec. We were cautious about waving the flag obviously, fearing that the marketplace would feel that Pepsi had overstepped its bounds.

Market success and qualitative reactions told us we were on to a winner. Also, consumers wanted us to lay claim to Pepsi's legacy. They told us that Pepsi is part of the fabric of Québec life and should be damn proud of it. This led to Québec-proud executions, "*Ici*" and "*Pepsiing*," in 2004—and "*Regional Expressions*" in early 2005. "*Ici*" homed in on how Québécois think/feel/act. "*Pepsiing*" and "*Regional Expressions*" played with the language. You had to be a Québécois to get it, and Pepsi got it.

An additional strength of the campaign is flexibility. When Pepsi North America directed Québec to showcase Pepsi with food, it was a relatively easy fit to create "*Speciale :30*" in 2005, celebrating Québécois cuisine.

## b) Media

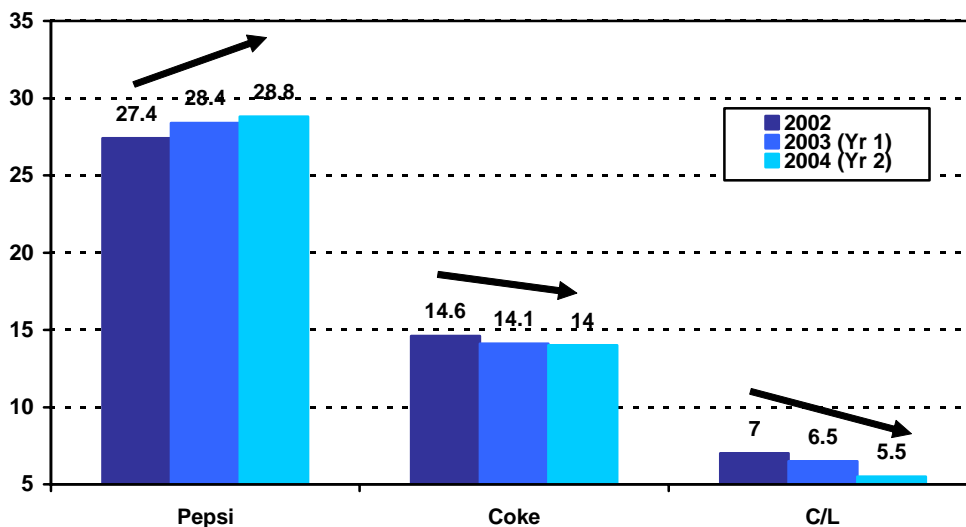
Meunier was such a part of Pepsi and Québec that his absence would be sorely missed. We had to establish the new campaign very quickly.

We focused on TV & Cinema. This was different from Coke's focus on outdoor, and gave us prominence in television. With the campaign established, we added :15s in 2004. This helped us buy out-of-home, bringing the five guys to the streets, and blunting Coke in their medium. (This was a major shift for Pepsi: Meunier had largely been on TV.)

## BUSINESS RESULTS:

Share had dropped from 29.9% in 1999 to 27.4% in 2002. With the new campaign this turned around. Share grew by 1.0 point in 2003 (a significant gain in this category), and continued to grow in 2004, adding another 0.4 points.

**Table 1: Pepsi Québec Share Performance**



Source: ACNielsen. Grocery. MM and Drug

To put this in context:

- English Canada, with no campaign shift, lost 0.6 points over the same period.
- The Québec gains were regular Pepsi only. They do not include line extensions like mini cans, Pepsi Vanilla , Diet Pepsi. It's a true measure of campaign strength to grow the heart of the franchise, even in the face of line extension activities.
- Testimony to success is the increased media budget in 2004.
- *Marketing Management Analytics* specialize in isolating ROI. In Québec, Pepsi volume per GRP increased 9% versus base, whereas English Canada remained flat.

## CAUSE AND EFFECT BETWEEN ADVERTISING AND RESULTS

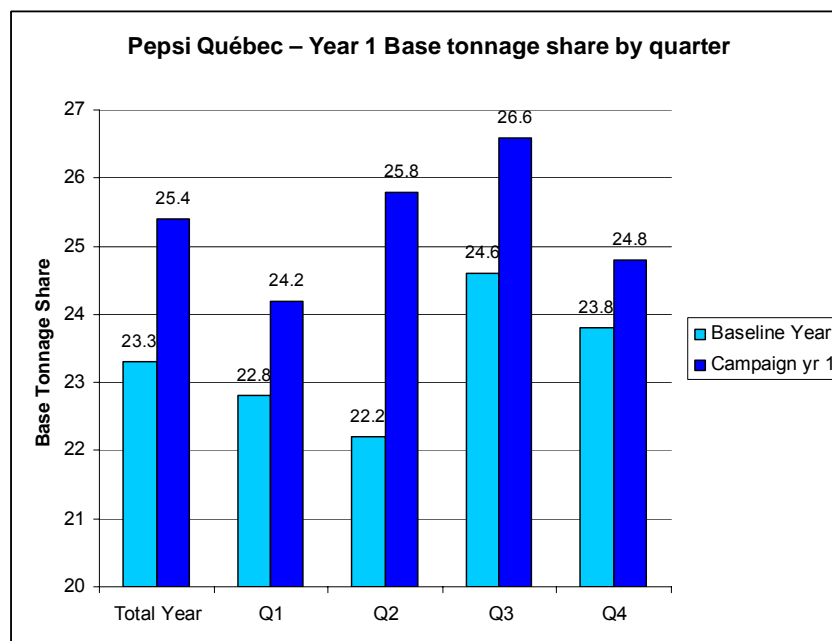
Promotion and merchandising play a major role in the category. And brands like Pepsi and Coke get high levels of trade support. However, “5 Guys” was the major catalyst in Pepsi’s share gains, for the following reasons:

1. *Pepsi Québec outperformed English Canada where no campaign shift had occurred.*

**Table 2: Québec vs. Rest of Canada (ROC) 2-Year Change**

Total SOM	Québec	ROC
Regular Pepsi	+1.4 pts	-0.6 pts

2. *Share growth is consistent with the effect of advertising and media weight over time.* The impact starts in Q1, then accelerates as media weight builds through Q2. There was no support in Q3 and Q4, though share is still at higher than base levels, proving the residual effect of the campaign. Table 3:



Source: ACNielsen – Grocery banner – baseline (unpromoted) volume share.

3. *Creative testing proved that we had a winner.*

The launch spot (“*The Chase*” :60/:30) outperformed norms on critical measures:

**Table 4: 2003 ACT Creative Testing Scores**

	“Chase”	CSD Norms
Brand Recall	70	64
Left me with a good feeling about the brand	72	53
Talks to someone like me	70	54
Entertaining	81	70
Brand Bonding	99	91

*Source: AD\*VANTAGE/ACT, Generations Research 2003*

In Year 2 LINK (Millward Brown) creative testing yielded equally exciting and positive results. “*Ici*” achieved an Awareness Index (AI) score of 11 for adults and 15 for teens—doubling or tripling the norm of 5, and placing the ad in the top 2% of all ads in the LINK database.

The “5 Guys” characters had, in short time, become a primary brand cue, with more than 30% of teens acknowledging that they were highly associated with Pepsi, and respondents claiming that the Guys were appropriate (85%) and likeable (96%).

**Crossover Note 21.**

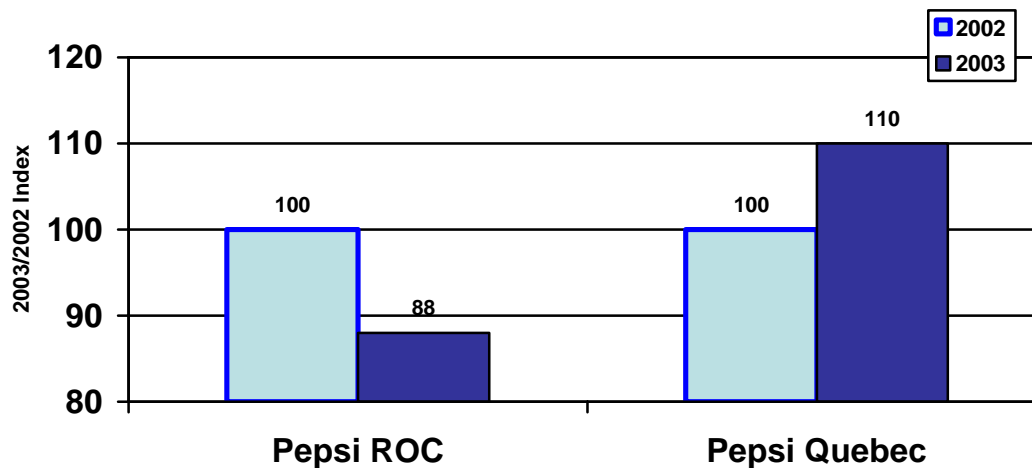
**Table 5: 2004 Millward Brown LINK Creative Testing**

	“ICI”	CSD Norm
Awareness Index (AI Score)	11 (adults) 15 (teens)	5
Couldn’t Help But Remember Pepsi	65	35
Left Me With A Good Feeling About The Brand	76	63
Makes The Brand More Appealing	66	54
Entertaining	87	73

4. In market tracking showed that the creative broke through.

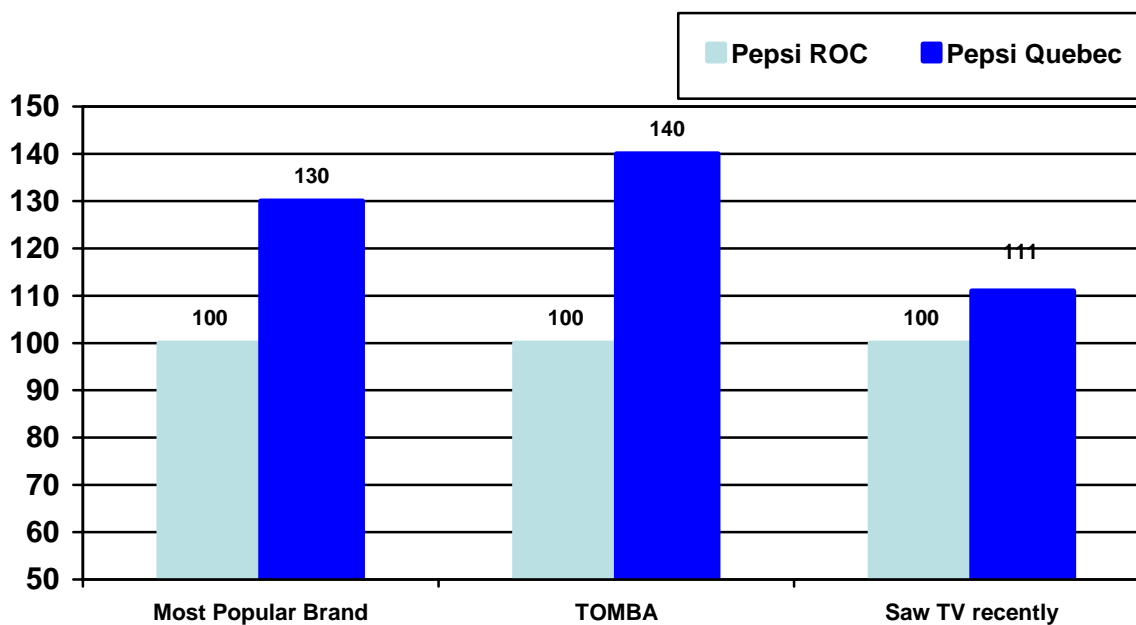
The campaign was being noticed and remembered very early on. Top-of Mind Advertising Awareness grew by 10% between base year and Year 1.

**Table 6: Pepsi Top of Mind Ad Awareness**



Year 2 *iTrac* tracking gave strong evidence that the campaign was having a positive impact on brand health. Key performance indicators (KPIs) of TOMBA<sup>2</sup>, popularity, ad awareness and favourite brand all grew over the campaign period.

**Table 7: 2004 KPI Performance**



<sup>2</sup> Top of Mind Brand Awareness (TOMBA)

5. *Pepsi brand share of voice actually decreased between base year and Year 1.*

Pepsi's SOV in Québec dropped from 47.7% in the base year to 45.3% in Year 1, while Coke's SOV increased slightly. It follows that it was creative effectiveness and not weight of spending that was the controlling variable.

6. *Pepsi's absolute and relative price position, if anything, was more adverse through the campaign years than in the base year, eliminating pricing as a driver.*

**Table 8: Pepsi Retail Price Index — Campaign Period vs. Base Year**

	<b>Base Year</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>
Québec	100	99	98
ROC	100	99	103

*Source: ACNielsen Grocery, Drug and MM data-Units measure in 24x8oz cases*

Relative to competition, Pepsi's pricing conditions deteriorated, especially in Year 1. The fact that the campaign was able to grow in this environment further speaks to the power of the campaign.

As the leading brand in Québec Pepsi has always had a slight retail advantage vs. Coke. This averaged 3% in the base year, but it disappeared in Year 1. In Year 2, Pepsi Coke discounted heavily, leaving Pepsi on average 3% more expensive. Despite this Pepsi share still grew.

**Table 9: Retail Selling Price – Québec (Index of price per unit)**

	<b>Base Year</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>
Vs Coke	97	100	103
Vs Control Label	159	158	155

*Source: ACNielsen MarketTrack – Grocery, Drug and MM-Units are 24x8oz cases*

7. *ACNielsen's baseline vs. incremental data show that Pepsi's growth was not a function of increased promotion pressure.*

Promotion and pricing are always important influence in this category. However, we can isolate the impact of advertising through baseline/incremental share analysis. Baseline is un-promoted volume; incremental is driven by promotion and display.

There are two reasons to support the fact that promotion was not a factor in Pepsi's share growth:

The first is the pricing data above. If Pepsi had received significantly increased promotion support in the Year 1, the associated pricing reductions would have shown up as a lower average price. It did not.

Secondly, Pepsi's share gains in Year 1 were driven entirely baseline share. In fact, Pepsi lost incremental share (share sold on deal) because of increased promotion from Control label. Coke's baseline share held.

**Table 10: Québec – Baseline vs. Incremental Share (Year 1)**

	Total Share	Baseline Share	Incremental (promoted) Share
Pepsi	+ 0.6	+2.0	-1.7
Coke	-0.4	-0.1	-0.9
Control label	- 0.5	-1.5	+1.1

*Source. ACNielsen Grocery banner data.*

*Read: Pepsi's total share grew +0.6 pts Baseline (un-promoted) share grew by 2.0pts. This was partially offset by losing 1.7 pts in share of promoted volume.*

*Note: Shares are different from those shown earlier, because this analysis is only available for Grocery Banners vs. the full trade universe.*

## **SUMMARY**

The "5 Guys" gave a new face to Pepsi. To grow mainline Pepsi's share by 1.4 points over two years, in the face of a revitalized Coke, an explosion of new CSD's, aggressive control label, and its own Line Extensions, is phenomenal.

The goal of finding an "new campaign with the same magic and resonance as Meunier" was achieved. The irreplaceable was replaced to great effect.

End of Case. Crossover Notes follow.

## INTRODUCTION TO CROSSOVER NOTES — CASSIES 2005

[Pepsi - Québec]

Crossover Notes have been going for several years, and now run to 28 pages.

We used to attach a full set to all cases, but to save a few trees, we now include only the Notes particular to any case.

The idea of Crossover Notes occurred to me while I was editing Cassies 1997.

I was a consultant by then. Before that I had reached the category manager level at P&G (what they quaintly called the Associate Advertising Manager). I had then clambered up the ladder at O&M, eventually becoming President and later Vice Chairman—both in Toronto. P&G and O&M were both passionate about “lessons learned,” and so was I. In those days (it seems hard to believe now) we felt rushed off our feet. But we did have time to study if campaigns were working or not, and come to conclusions about why.

There are lessons, like gold dust, in all the Cassies cases. So in 1997 I decided to extract them. This started with bite-sized footnotes about lessons that “cross over” from one case to another. And the idea kept growing. It is still anchored to winning cases, but I also draw on other thinking for more complex issues.

You can use Crossover Notes in two ways. Although they didn’t start out 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 over 150 published cases. They’re a growing body of experience. I hope I’ve helped pass some of the learning on.

*David Rutherford*

*Toronto: December 2005.*

***For advice on brand-building see Excellence in Brand Communication—authored by leading Canadians from across the marketing and advertising spectrum.***

***It is published by the ICA. See [www.ica.adbeast.com](http://www.ica.adbeast.com).***

## INDEX OF CROSSOVER NOTES FOR CASSIES 2005

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1. What a Brand Stands For.	✓
2. Brand Truths.	✓
3. Core Equity versus Price & Promotion.	
4. Business Strategy dictated by the Brand Positioning.	
5. The Total Brand Experience.	
6. Should the product be improved?	
7. Fighting for the Same High Ground.	
8. Classic Rivalries.	✓
9. Turnarounds.	✓
10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?	
11. The Eureka Insight.	
12. Changing the Goalposts.	✓
13. Immediate vs. Long-Term Effect.	
14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.	
15. Baby with the Bathwater.	
16. When a campaign stumbles.	✓
17. Turning a liability into a strength.	
18. Keeping it Simple.	
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21. Likeability.	✓
22. Humour in a Serious Category.	
23. Problem versus Solution.	
24. Tough Topics.	
25. Brand Linkage (when should the brand name appear).	
26. Awareness Alone.	
27. Share of Mind, Share of Voice, Spending.	
28. Media Learning.	
29. Pre-emptive Media.	
30. Reach and Frequency versus Large-Space Impact.	
31. Transcending Advertising.	✓
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34. Longer and Broader Effects, and <b>A Closing Thought</b> .	

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

## PEPSI - QUÉBEC. CROSSOVER NOTES. CASSIES 2005.

1. **What a Brand Stands For.** People in real life hardly give the deeper meaning of brands a second thought. They know that some appeal more than others. They may have a sense that brands jostle for their attention. But that's about it. They certainly don't agonize over what is the essence of this, or the abiding truth of that.

But branding goes deeper than we in marketing may realize. Before marketing was even thought of, branding was part of life. Everything from national flags, to coinage, to the uniforms on soldiers, boy scouts and Supreme Court judges, to the plumage on peacocks (human and otherwise), is a form of branding. Business had an early example in the 1800s when Harley Procter of P&G heard a pastor quote a biblical text about ivory palaces. Goodbye Procter & Gamble White Soap. Hello Ivory. More recently, Tom Peters published *A Brand Called You*. And Tony Blair tried to re-brand the UK as "Cool Britannia."

A brand, in the fullest sense, is hard to define. Dictionary definitions tend to focus on the trademark aspect, and yes, branding does involve some sort of identifying mark. But this misses the point. What makes a brand valuable?

The answer is *The Advantage of Belief*.<sup>3</sup> Charles Revson of Revlon famously said, "In the factory we make cosmetics. In the store we sell hope." In other words, a brand is not a product; it's what people believe about a product. These beliefs can be immensely powerful. The most astonishing is the placebo effect. In clinical trials, many patients respond to the "sugar pill," even when they have serious diseases. We see the same thing with blind and identified product tests. With a strong brand, the preference jumps. (See *What's in a Name* by John Philip Jones.) And when the *Advantage of Belief* takes hold, it leads to a long list of benefits:

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| a) Customer loyalty               | e) Facilitating brand extensions              |
| b) Higher price                   | f) Withstanding competitive attack            |
| c) Higher cash flows              | g) Motivating staff and attracting new talent |
| d) Higher long-term profitability | h) Potentially augmenting the stock price     |

This doesn't, of course, answer the question, "how do you build these beliefs?" There are widely varying notions, but most agree on the basic principles: (1) stake out what the brand can and should stand for (2) stick with this over time (3) evolve to account for lessons learned and market changes.<sup>4</sup>

This can't be done by empty promises. We have to assess what consumers want against what the product delivers—and tell the story better than competitors do. We have a melting pot of perceptions and reality to work with. All the "brand" ideas are there to help—Brand Image, Equity, Personality, Character, Essence, Relationship, Footprint, Truth, Soul, Identity, and so on—along with old faithfuls like Positioning, Focus of Sale, USP, Features, Attributes, Benefits and Values. Whatever the terminology, though, "what the brand stands for" is critical.

<sup>3</sup> This is a phrase of mine, though the idea that a brand is "more" has been described by many authors.

<sup>4</sup> How do you do this, and evolve? See *Excellence in Brand Communication*: [www.ica.adbeast.com](http://www.ica.adbeast.com)

- 2. Brand Truths.** Successful advertising (in fact all successful communication) resonates with its audience. As a marketer, you may want people to believe that you have the best-tasting coffee, but simply saying, “I have the best-tasting coffee” will not usually get the resonance you need. One school of thought is to say the obvious as loudly and crassly as you can. We could call it the Bad Boy syndrome. Another has led to the idea of Brand Truths. These operate on a deeper level than simple claims. One of the top UK agencies described it as “we interrogate the product until it confesses its strength.”

I was once the Brand Manager on Tide, and when we were asked, “What does Tide stand for” we said, “Superior cleaning. Not whitening. Not Brightening. Not Fabric Care. Superior *cleaning*.”<sup>5</sup>

Superior cleaning was the religion on Tide, and Tide delivered, despite the cliché that all detergents are alike. But this was only a glimmer of the Brand Truth. If you “interrogated” Tide the most startling truth was the *intense belief* of Tide users. This came to life in the immensely successful “Two for One Swap” campaign. Hidden cameras watched as women who had just bought Tide were offered two boxes of another detergent in exchange. They adamantly refused, delivering off-the-cuff endorsements that no copywriter could ever have come up with. The campaign ran for years, and only came to an end because of its success—women knew it so well that the “candid camera” interview became impossible. Many Brand Truths are also insights, and for a list see [11. The Eureka Insight](#) and [12. Changing the Goalposts](#).

- 8. Classic Rivalries.** Examples in the Cassies are as follows:

- Canadian versus Blue. Cassies I, III, and 2001.
- Dove versus Ivory. Cassies III.
- Richmond Savings versus the banks. Cassies III.
- Lipton versus Campbell. Cassies 2001.
- Sunlight versus Tide. Cassies 99 and 2001.
- Labatt Bleue versus Molson Dry. Cassies 2002.
- Listerine versus Scope. Cassies II and 2002.
- Desjardins versus the banks. Cassies 2004.
- Cottonelle versus Pampers. Cassies 2004.
- Energizer versus Duracell in Cassies 2005, and also Cassies II.
- Dentyne versus Excel in Cassies 2005.
- Pepsi versus Coke. Cassies 2005, and also Cassies I and 2002.

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<sup>5</sup> P&G defined “what the brand stands for” by a document they called The Creative Strategy. In those days, if anyone even dreamt that the Tide Creative Strategy should include whitening, brightening etc. it was seen as an offence against all that was holy.

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

**Cassies I**

- Crispy Crunch. Molson Canadian.
- Pepsi. Québec.

**Cassies II**

- Listerine. Québec.
- Oh Hungry? Oh Henry.

**Cassies II**

- Dove. "Litmus."
- Molson Canadian. "I AM."
- Philadelphia Cream Cheese.

**Cassies 99**

- becel. "Young at Heart"
- Eggs. Wonder Bread
- Sunlight. "Go Ahead. Get Dirty."

**Cassies 2001**

- Kraft Dinner.
- Lipton Chicken Noodle.

**Cassies 2002**

- BMO Québec.
- Campbell's Soup. Listerine.
- CFL. Pro•Line.
- Easter Seals Relay.
- Sleeman Québec.

**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 (Québec 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.
- Québec Lotto 6/49.
- Pepsi – Québec and Québec Milk.

**10. Conventional Wisdom—should it be challenged?** Conventional wisdom will sometimes be right. But it can also be a roadblock. When US Pepsi executives first saw the Pepsi Challenge, they apparently said, "that's not Pepsi," and rejected it. The Dove Litmus campaign (*Crossover Note 7*) ran into a fusillade of disapproval at client/agency global head offices—and only survived because the Canadian team stuck to their guns. Here are others that went against the tried and true:

***From Cassies I, III, 99, 2001:***

- Crispy Crunch, making a virtue of greed—a taboo in confectionery.
- Richmond Savings, poking fun at the Humungous banks.
- Sunlight, saying it's OK to get dirty.
- Fido and Clearnet, using dogs and frogs.
- Various financial accounts—so many that humour has almost become the new conventional wisdom: AGF, Clarica, BMO Québec (and Scotiabank in 2002).

***From Cassies 2002:***

- Bud Light, not going after the young, legal-age, male heavy drinker.
- CFL, against younger viewers, accepting they might alienate the core franchise.
- ED, going high-profile with a taboo topic.
- Five Alive, switching from Moms to young males.
- Irving Home Furnaces, using age as a plus for attracting attention.
- Labatt Bleue, breaking the Christmas “Happy Holidays” tradition.
- Pine-Sol, breaking the conventions of household cleaner advertising.
- Sleeman in Québec, embracing the English heritage with “honest frenglish.”
- Sloche, rejoicing in being politically and nutritionally incorrect.

***From Cassies 2003:***

- Bait Cars, talking directly to criminals.
- Crown Diamond Paint, advertising that men hate painting.
- Familiprix, using humour to sell health products.
- Irving Mainway Coffee, making a virtue of the caffeine hit.
- Toyota Matrix, breaking all the Toyota “rules.”
- Sola Nero, could not be further away from wine snobbery.
- Super 7, reveling in the excesses of the super-rich.
- Université de Montréal, with no smiling students and ivy covered buildings.

***From Cassies 2004:***

- Cirque du Soleil, breaking convention as a corporate philosophy.
- Elections Ontario, resisting the temptation to use social responsibility.
- The Miller campaign, throwing out the conventions of political advertising.
- Réno Dépôt, investing in the brand, rather than “price and item.”
- Toyota Sienna, with their “cool minivan” thinking.

***From Cassies 2005:***

- Cruisin’ to Win, thinking small.
- Crescendo, moving away from “delivery/takeout” as the high ground.
- Energizer Lithium, ignoring the conventions of battery advertising.
- Baileys, breaking out of the liqueur cabinet.
- Hubba Bubba, using brand thinking in a merchandizing category.
- Moores, redefining the way to look at men shoppers.
- Familiprix, selling health products hilariously.
- The Anti-smoking campaign, also being hilarious in how it talked to teenagers.

**14. Refreshing a continuing campaign.** When I was at P&G and O&M, all the big advertisers and their agencies thought in terms of campaigns. If you presented new advertising, and got the comment “that’s just a one-off,” it was the kiss of death. In those days, a campaign was usually defined by television. There would be one commercial, or a pool, refreshed over time. Nowadays, a campaign is more complicated. But it’s fair to say that we (clients and agencies) still believe that campaigns are the right/best way to build a brand.<sup>6</sup>

Recently, the idea of “the brand relationship” has taken hold. This is the notion that we treat brands like friends. Brand Truths can come out of this type of thinking, as can other insights. Relationships can be very different, but for most people, the good ones are based on things like trust and consistency, though not dullness and predictability. This has led to the idea that brands should present a consistent face over time (assuming, of course, that they are standing for the right thing.)

There is still the question, though, of what is a campaign? At one time, packaged goods advertisers (and some agencies) believed in strict pool-outs. But campaigns don’t have to be so formatted. The following list doesn’t pretend to be exhaustive (some campaigns don’t lend themselves to being categorized) but it starts at rigid end of the spectrum, and extends to the holistic. All versions have their successes and failures, and I hope this will help free up some of the rigid thinking:

- **Strict Pool-Out.** Campaigns like “Who wants Gum? I do. I do.” There is a repeated format, often with a USP demo or slogan. Some people think this type of advertising is passé. Others remember it fondly.
- **Hall of Fame Pool-Out.** Some think pool outs are dull, predictable and clichéd. Not necessarily. The 20-odd year campaign for Hamlet cigars in the UK is rigidly formatted, but spectacularly creative and effective. Familiprix is the same.
- **Situational Pool-Out.** These don’t have the format of the strict pool out but still have a clear connection between executions. Diet Pepsi’s “Forever Young” and Pro•Line’s “Anyone can Win” are examples. Huggies “Happy Baby” is one of the longest-running. Clearnet/Telus is in this camp too.

This category includes spectacular ads like “Manhattan Landing” and “Face” for British Airways. Kit Kat is a different type of example, where the “break” continues, and the challenge is to keep it up to date.

- **Icons.** These can anchor a campaign (Maytag Man, Marlboro Cowboy) or be a property (Tony the Tiger, Pillsbury Doughboy). Absolut Vodka uses its bottle as an icon, and it’s brilliant. The Familiprix pharmacist is hilariously effective.
- **Spokes-people, and Spokes-animals.** Dave Thomas and Colonel Sanders, god rest their souls, are examples, as is Morty the Bison for Manitoba Telecom.
- **Storytelling with continuing character(s).** The Oxo family in the UK is a long-running examples. Bartles and Jaymes was a wonderful success story in the US. Personalities have been very successful in Québec e.g. the Pepsi and Listerine Grand Prix winners in Cassies I and II.

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<sup>6</sup> A young creative friend said to me, “where does the belief in campaigns come from? Young people want constant change. What’s wrong with a stream of one-off ideas?” This would have been heresy at one time, and perhaps still is. But it’s food for thought.

- **Music-Based.** Music sometimes goes beyond a supporting role, and becomes part of the brand character. Soft Drinks, Cars, Fast Food, and Beer have all built campaigns this way. In packaged goods, becel's "young at heart" campaign would be an example.
- **Consistent "Voice and Attitude."** These campaigns are held together by something more subtle. Perhaps the most impressive was Volkswagen in the 60s. Individual executions were different (serious, comical, ironic, dramatic) but they all had the Volkswagen voice and attitude. Brands like Nike are in this category. Benneton is an extreme example.
- **Same core message. Customized execution.** To people with a strict "pool-out" mindset, this hardly qualifies at all. But the overall effect can be very powerful. The best Cassies example is the 4-year Dove Case from Cassies III.<sup>7</sup>

The campaign started in late 91 with "Litmus," a strikingly simple demonstration, with no people or voice over—just haunting music, and some supers. Then came a raucous candid-camera commercial of focus group women doing the litmus test for themselves. Then a talking-head scientist who invented Dove. Then another demonstration—similar in style to "Litmus," with the haunting music again.

The first three executions are so different that some people would not have approved them. Given the subsequent results, that would have been a pity. What holds it all together? The continuing promise of mildness. A scrupulously honest and consistent brand character. And an element of surprise in each execution. Note, though, that there are no continuing slogans or visual icons.

More generally, It's an open question whether today's obsessively short-term attitude is causing us to lose the drive we once had for great campaigns. I hope it isn't.

**16. When a campaign stumbles.** This might be a momentary stutter and (if we were clairvoyant) we would know what was needed to make a minor fix. But it might be the first clue that something is going off the rails. In this situation, the pressure can lead to snap (and wrong) judgments. The best answer usually comes from a blend of experience, judgment, intuition, vision, and research. Here are some pointers.

1. **Dig deep into trends and tastes.** You could be on the wrong side of a tectonic shift. They can be massive. "Made in Japan" used to mean a cheap, shlocky, knock-off, and North American business took years to see what was coming. Crossover Note 6. Consider Listerine. "Always a bridesmaid, but never a bride" started life in a Listerine advertisement, reflecting a bad breath positioning that had been in place for as long as anyone can remember. But a shift was happening, towards the idea of a healthy mouth. (See Cassies 1995 and 2002). Something similar has happened in toothpaste. At one time, Pepsodent ("you'll wonder where the yellow went...") was the leader, and whitening was the high ground. Crest came along with fluoride (and dental association endorsement).

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<sup>7</sup> Another example is Budweiser in Quebec. Its 10-year campaign has always been centred on rock 'n roll, but it has always evolved.

This transformed the market, and Pepsodent slid into history. Over the next generation, though, cavities stopped being the problem they once were.<sup>8</sup> The market started to shift towards “mouth health” and Colgate got there first with Colgate Total, knocking Crest off its Number 1 perch. Crest responded with Crest Complete—and now the whole market has come full circle with a furious battle for whitening again.

2. **Look at the goalposts.** If they really haven’t changed, then it’s likely that you just have a short-term stutter. But if they have, try to envisage the new game. See [11. The Eureka Insight](#), and [12. Changing the Goalposts](#).
3. **Think through the change needed.** See [6. Should the product be improved?](#) and [14. Refreshing a Continuing Campaign](#).
4. **Change for the right reasons.** It’s broadly true that long-running campaigns—kept fresh and relevant—are great brand-builders. And it’s sadly true that new people, wanting to make their mark, change things for change’s sake. But once in a while, wholesale change is right. Molson Canadian (Cassies I) was a niche player when it launched “What Beer’s all About” in the late 80s. Canadian became mainstream, and displaced Labatt Blue as market leader. You’d think they’d keep going with “What Beer’s all About.” And they did for a few years. But tastes were shifting. To stay ahead of this, they launched “I AM” in the mid 90s (Cassies III). This was successful, but eventually it too ran out of steam. Canadian then re-incarnated again with “Joe’s Rant.” (Cassies 2001.)

More recently, though this time the need for change more obvious, Juicy Fruit (almost literally) destroyed its former image with the guitar-smashing campaign. (Cassies 2005.)

**21. Likeability.** Nowadays, It’s generally felt a advertising should be *likeable*. But there was once an opposite school of thought. The poster-child was “Ring around the Collar” for Wisk—highly disliked *and* highly effective. Dissonant views on likeability, in part, reflect the long-running feud between creativity and selling power—do they work together, or does creativity get in the way? Cassies winners demonstrate that *they work together*, and the day may come when this ancient vendetta is put to rest.

Likeability hit the headlines in the mid 80s, with a paper by Alex Biel. Later, in the early 90s, the Advertising Research Foundation caused another stir. The ARF Copy Research Validity Project<sup>9</sup> examined major copy tests. The results showed modest predictive ability on shipments and share, but no technique did particularly well. This caused a blizzard of rebuttal from the research firms. But it also caused a surprise. Likeability, which until then had been seen as a bit of a non-issue, was (apparently) one of the better predictors of in-market success.

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<sup>8</sup> Ironically, Crest had helped make this happen, by driving the whole market in this direction.

<sup>9</sup> It tested commercials that were known to be effective (or not) to find out if copy tests could pick winners from losers. This required pairs of commercials for the same brand (to remove the “brand” effect). The commercials also had to have shipment/share results (good or bad) over at least a year in split-cable test markets. It was hard to find these pairs of such commercials, but eventually five pairs were validated. The ARF replicated the major techniques, and “pre-tested” each commercial. The results, while modestly positive, did not show especially strong predictive ability for any technique.

A bandwagon started. For quite a lot of people their mental model is that advertising has to (mostly) entertain to do its job. They seized on the “entertaining” meaning of liking. Others pointed out that “liking” means different things to different people. Alex Biel found that it is closer to “meaningfulness” than “entertainment.” Others say that it is a combination of positives (Entertaining, Relevant, Newsworthy, Empathetic) and/or the absence of negatives (Unfamiliar, Confusing, Alienating). In other words, it’s simplistic to assume that liking just means “entertaining.”

In the Cassies, much of the advertising is likeable in the ordinary sense of the word, but some (Big Brothers Vancouver, Dove Litmus, Ethical Funds, Pfizer’s ED, SAAQ’s anti-speeding, Canadian Blood Services, Motrin, United Way, Leucan, Run for the Cure come to mind) could only be called likeable in the “meaningful” sense.

And then, as with so much in advertising, we must also be alert to exceptions. Tim Broadbent, in his speech at the 2004 Cassies, showed a very unsettling UK winner from the 2003 IPA Awards. Lennox Lewis, talking about wife abuse, smoulders with repressed rage in a very disturbing (but effective) commercial for police recruitment.

For myself, I’ve found the best approach is to think of liking on the broader lines defined above.

For more, see such papers as *Love the ad. Buy the product?* Alexander Biel. Admap 1990. *Do our commercials have to be liked?* Colin McDonald. Admap 1995. *Like it or Not, Liking is not Enough.* Nigel Hollis. Journal of Advertising Research 1995.

**31. Transcending Advertising.** A number of Cassies campaigns have moved into popular culture—at least for a while. Generally, advertisers and agencies are pleased when this happens, though there are always nay-sayers asking “Is it on strategy? Is it relevant? Is it building the business?”

“Where’s the Beef?” had a lot more than 15 minutes of fame. But did it build the Wendy’s business? I’ve seen arguments on both sides. Budweiser and “Whassup” faced similar questions. Cassies cases that mention the effect—and they all do it positively—include Richmond Savings (Cassies III); Molson Canadian, Tourism New Brunswick, Manitoba Telecom (Cassies 2001); Bank of Montreal and ED (Cassies 2002); Familiprix, Irving Mainway Coffee and Motrin (Cassies 2003); Desjardins and Québec Milk (Cassies 2004). Crescendo Pizza, Familiprix, Pepsi – Québec and Québec Milk (Cassies 2005).

Viral marketing is the latest incarnation of effort that transcends advertising. There has not yet been a Cassies winner based on this, but it would be good to see one.

End of Pepsi – Québec Crossover Notes