

# TAXI

## **TAXI NYC**

### **PAUL LAVOIE CHAIRMAN**

In 1992, Paul Lavoie co-founded TAXI with partner Jane Hope, successfully combining the disciplines of advertising and design. Growing into seven offices in Canada, the U.S., and Europe, and with an expanded product offering, TAXI remains independent and committed to its original vision. TAXI has been recognized in the industry for its fresh, unconventional approach, creating consistently strong brands for companies such as BMW/MINI, WestJet, Canadian Tire, Blue Shield of California, Pfizer/VIAGRA, and TELUS.

TAXI has been named Agency of the Year by Canadian publications for seven years and has been recognized as one of Canada's 50 Best Managed Companies for the last five years. Since arriving in the U.S. in 2005, TAXI garnered the AAAA Creative Excellence Award (<100 employees) in 2007 and again in 2008.

Marketing magazine, in August 2008, named Lavoie one of the 10 most influential pioneers in Canadian marketing over the past century. In 2006, he was listed by Creativity magazine among the 50 most influential creative minds of the last 20 years. That year, he also became the youngest inductee of the Canadian Marketing Hall of Legends. In 2007, Paul received the Spiess award for lifetime achievement by the Canadian Bessies Awards.

Paul is the President of The Art Directors Club Advisory Board, a member of the Marketing Advisory Committee of the MoMA, and a board member of the Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter.

### **WHAT CLIENTS SAY...**

"Paul is made up of the following: irreverence, passion, quality, humanity, practicality and intelligence."

"Paul is one of the last truly original creative people in this town. If creative is a funnel, Paul operates at the top – at 50,000 feet – finding you the freshest ideas in the world."

### **JANE HOPE VICE-CHAIR**

In 1992, Jane Hope co-founded TAXI with partner Paul Lavoie, successfully combining the disciplines of advertising and design. Growing into seven offices in Canada, the U.S., and Europe, and with an expanded product offering, TAXI remains independent and committed to its original vision. TAXI has been recognized in the industry for its fresh, unconventional approach, creating consistently strong brands for companies such as BMW/MINI, WestJet, Canadian Tire, Blue Shield of California, Pfizer/VIAGRA, and TELUS.

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Jane is an advocate for the power of strategic design and integrated communications. Trained in fine art, she began her career first as a fashion illustrator and advertising art director, before migrating to design and branding. Her uncommon combination of right brain and left brain thinking, and pragmatic pursuit of the true essence of a problem, is matched only by her artful ability to rally everyone around a distinctive solution.

Jane's relentless insistence on the consistent articulation of a brand at all touchpoints has been at the heart of many launches for TAXI's clients, most notably TELUS Communications, while she has shared the power of design with the community in speaking engagements for AIGA, Corporate Design Foundation, and RGD Ontario DesignThinkers.

Jane applies this same vision to TAXI, playing a lead role in defining and implementing the brand and the "TAXI Way" across the growing network. She oversees the TAXI brand, including corporate communications and internal branding.

## **WHAT CLIENTS SAY...**

"Jane Hope has an amazing creative spirit. The free-flowing creative process is engrained at TAXI and yet they have very disciplined standards. They protect their vision – that's their core reason for being."

"Jane can make arcane concepts imaginable, and has the tactful ability to show you that, however well intended your idea, it can be greatly improved upon, to the satisfaction and ultimate pleasure of all."

## **ROB GUENETTE CEO, TAXI**

Known throughout the advertising industry for his passion and energy, Rob has worked on both the client and agency sides of the business. On the client side, he was with Unilever for 14 years before moving to Molson in 2000 as VP and Global Advertising Director. Crossing over to the agency side, Rob has been president of TAXI Toronto since 2004.

Rob combines his passion for advertising, design, culture and the arts with what he calls a "blue collar" management style that is close to people, close to truth, and very "no- nonsense." Rob built his career as an agency client with a reputation for buying the best work the industry could produce. At TAXI, he uses that ability to inspire greatness and shape client relationships that are built on shared goals and standards. A recent profile in Strategy Magazine described him as "the most outspoken and successful evangelist for making advertising that has attitude."

**WHAT CLIENTS SAY...**

"Having known Rob Guenette for over ten years, he is best summed up in one word – passion. Rob brings a wealth of knowledge to the table and manages to do so in such an infectiously exuberant style that excites people both on the agency and client side. Rob backs this up with sound strategic thinking that will stand TAXI in good stead in the years to come. Rob is an experience not to be missed.

**STEVE MYKOLYN****CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER**

Steve Mykolyn joined TAXI in 2001 as Creative Director of Interactive and Design. The Toronto-based agency is recognized globally for its ability to seamlessly combine Advertising, Interactive and Design under one roof. Prior to joining TAXI, Steve was Creative Director at Organic Inc. and ICE.

Over the last ten years, he has produced online campaigns for Sony, Levi's, Nike and MINI winning hundreds of awards including Cyber gold at Cannes, a Pencil at the One Show, D&AD and Communication Arts. Steve also has a passion for books and film.

In 1997, he wrote and directed El Dia La Noche Y Los Muertos, an award-winning documentary about Mexico's Day of the Dead Festival. The film was chosen to close Hispanic Heritage Month at the Smithsonian Institute. Steve's books include the writing and design of Amusing World for photographer Russell Monk as well as Metal Leather Flesh, an exploration of motorcycle culture.

**WHAT CLIENTS SAY...**

"Our challenge was coming up with something that could speak to three totally different audiences. Steve listened to our needs and came back with the right choices. The point is – he listened, he got it and he helped us get it."

"I'm always intrigued when he does a presentation. He's laid back. And this, coupled with his sense of humour, lets him say things that others wouldn't get away with. It's always fun to have Steve in the room and to see something through his eyes. It can be quite different than what's expected."

**DURK BARNHILL****GENERAL MANAGER**

Durk is a team player and a coach. No really, Google him. He was 1987's top soccer player at his alma mater Trinity College and he still plays and coaches every week. It would be too easy to exploit metaphors about a keen ability to see the next play, or mentoring his team towards shared goals – but they'd be true. Durk's fans laud his commitment to people, his ability to listen, to define a clear direction, and to deliver results. His 20 years of experience growing agencies and growing client accounts from New York to Minneapolis and from San Francisco to Los Angeles are proof.

Of note are stints as leader of the precedent-setting Miller Lite "Creative Superstar" campaign at Fallon, Director of Client Service at Roberts & Tarlow, Worldwide Account Director at McCann Erickson on the Nestlé USA business, and General Manager of Saatchi & Saatchi's 80-person San Francisco office. Client responsibilities have also included Neutrogena, Coca-Cola foods, and General Mills. Most recently, at

Mother New York, he was the director of new business and lead strategist on all Johnson & Johnson business.

Like a true coach, Durk attributes his successes in life and at work to the team. At home, that means rooting for his three kids both on and off the pitch and getting a generous share of life lessons in return.

**DANIEL RABINOWICZ**  
**PRESIDENT, TAXI NYC**

Daniel knows that the consumer is first and foremost a smart human being eager to be surprised, delighted and engaged by innovation. He has consistently led clients to success with his astute understanding of human nature and business strategy. He guides teams and businesses with a watchful eye for simplifying the process, outsmarting competitors, and seeking excellence in every detail. His twenty-plus years of industry experience touch on virtually every category, from telecom, cars and fast food, to beverages, airlines and healthcare.

**WHAT CLIENTS SAY...**

“Dan Rabinowicz benefits from an inherent capacity to distill complex and disparate information into compelling, crystallized strategic directions – the results are an empathetic alignment with consumers’ needs. Dan provides an invigorating perspective on challenging the operative conventional wisdoms and stimulating the team to achieving breakthrough results.”

**RON SMRCZEK**  
**EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR**

Ron got his start in advertising a little early, appearing in a cookie commercial at age five. After questioning the prop and lighting decisions, he would have to wait some 15 years before getting the chance to influence another shoot.

Ron’s VIAGRA “Bleep” campaign was Best of Show at the Addy Awards and one of the world’s top five campaigns in 2006 according to The Gunn Report. The follow up “Gibberish” campaign garnered both Gold and Silver Lions at Cannes in 2007. He ranked among the top ten creatives worldwide in the Boards Magazine festival report card and has received hundreds of international and local accolades, including Cannes Gold Lions, One Show Gold Pencils, Gold Clios, Communication Arts, D&AD, and Best of Show at Marketing Magazine and The Bessies..

Ron hails from Toronto, where he began his career as an Art Director in 1996. He joined TAXI initially in 2003, and after a brief stint at ZIG, returned to TAXI Toronto as Associate Creative Director in 2006 and then Creative Director in 2007. This aggressive career growth saw Ron’s responsibilities grow to also include Canadian Tire (Canada’s largest retailer), Molson-Coors “Rickard’s Red” and “Carling” brands, and of course Pfizer VIAGRA, among others. Now Executive Creative Director in New York, Ron’s jurisdiction includes all major client accounts and overseeing all of TAXI’s creative disciplines, including Interactive and Design.

Ron grasps strategy instinctively and makes translating it into big ideas look easy. At the same time, as an uncompromising craftsman, Ron is ready to invest the hard labour needed to deliver executional

excellence. These two sides of Ron have made him a collaborator who both inspires and mentors. This also means that his creative appetite for media innovation has not replaced his craving to be on set when the lighting decisions are made.

**CAROLINE KREDIET**  
**PLANNING DIRECTOR**

Caroline will admit to being pushy, in the sense that she believes in pushing boundaries and always questioning the conventional. Her mission for every brand she works on is to push the strategy to the edge – an edge that will inspire creatives with incisive human truths that will lead to standout work and standout brand sales.

The same drive to test boundaries set the pace for her career path. After completing an M.A. honours degree in history at the University of Edinburgh, she won a place in the WPP fellowship program, where she worked at Ogilvy London and Landor New York on businesses such as Unilever, Goldman Sachs, Motorola, and Jose Cuervo. Caroline joined Berlin Cameron United in 2002 and was part of the core team that won global assignments for Coca-Cola, Samsung, and Pernod Ricard, as well as leading projects for Safeway USA, and Dean Foods' Silk Soymilk. Moving to Euro RSCG in 2006, she took the reins as Group Planning Director on accounts as diverse as Exxon Mobil, Heineken's Dos Equis, Jaguar, and Nestlé.

Clearly never one to set limits, outside the office Caroline conquers the water by swimming, sailing, or skating, listens to NPR's Radio Lab for the latest scientific trivia, and admits to an obsessive taste for exotic fruit!

**DOUG JAEGER**  
**INNOVATION DIRECTOR**

Doug gets people talking. And that is the whole point. A child prodigy of the digital generation, he brings remarkable credentials in design, digital, social media, event, and brand experience. As an evangelist for the effective wielding of these media, he works with TAXI teams and clients across the agency network in a no-nonsense way that gets things done.

Doug's trademark willingness to take calculated risks and never balk at a challenge drove him from studies in the performing and visual arts at Syracuse University to a stint as a graphic designer before seizing on the emergence of digital – first, as a creative director and, eventually, as partner at the newly formed digital unit of JWT New York. His innovative De Beers design-your-own-engagement-ring site caught the attention of TBWA\Chiat\Day, who made him group creative director. There he designed Orbitz.com, and had the opportunity to collaborate with agency chairman Jean-Marie Dru to launch The Disruption Group, a new creative practice that went beyond traditional advertising to include product innovation assignments and brand storytelling initiatives.

That experience provoked Doug's own vision of a creative incubator focused on how experience and technology influence consumers' connections with brands and, in 2003, he co-founded New York-based thehappycorp global. Client mandates at thehappycorp global included Apple, Bacardi, Procter & Gamble, Virgin, Brooklyn Brewery, VH1, and MoMA.

Doug was elected the youngest president in the 88-year history of The Art Directors Club in 2008. He is also Director of LVHRD ([www.lvhrd.org](http://www.lvhrd.org)), a project that fuels interaction between creative professionals through unconventional networking events and digital media. A sought-after industry contributor, his recent experiences include judging the Effie Brand Experience, Webby Awards, and One Show Interactive, and speaking at F5, UnBeige, and New Frontiers of Graphic Design. His personal accolades include Cannes Lion wins for Absolut.com, Online Paid Media campaign, and Doctors Without Borders campaign.

## **WYLIE KAIN**

### **BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

Meet Wylie and you'll probably be tempted to try and figure her out. Is she driven by her sense of adventure? Is she a button-downed detail person? Is she happiest when she's leading significant management and financial responsibilities or just letting loose with the lads? The answer to all of the above is yes.

Climbing the ranks of some of the country's most reputable creative agencies such as kirshenbaum, bond & partners, Bartle Bogle Hegarty and Wieden + Kennedy, Wylie has lead accounts like Pfizer, ING, Sharp and NIKE. The diversity of her client experience is matched by the broad scope of those assignments from brand positioning and strategic platform marketing plans to integrated campaigns including TV, print and online, as well as PR, internal communications, trade communications, and events.

And in the ultimate paradox, this former Nouvelle Sorbonne student has little time for existential musing in Parisian cafes, since she is usually up at 5 a.m. training for her next marathon.

## **RICH MUHLSTOCK**

### **GENERAL MANAGER TAXI CONTENT**

Rich is the man you want on the team, or even better, leading the team. His approach is completely focused on rallying all players toward a shared goal, and his 17 years of industry experience attest to his commitment to the integration of diverse skills and ideas. Rich kicked off as a media planner and migrated to account management, bringing together solutions that have included events, branded products, promotions, trade shows and trade advertising, PR, interactive, and of course traditional advertising.

His client experience stretches from technology (SAP, Screaming Media, Connected) to sports (National Thoroughbred Racing Association, Champion, Pro Player Licensed Apparel) and packaged goods (Procter & Gamble's NyQuil, DayQuil, LiquiCaps, Bounce, Ivory Snow, Ariel). Rich is known for creating an atmosphere of open communication and trust. His clients value his understanding of their business and creative teams count on him to carry a great idea to the finish line.

## **RON WILSON**

### **COO, CFO TAXI**

To put it in financial terms, Ron's tireless energy, enthusiasm, and drive have been a prime asset in the steady growth of TAXI. Stretching metaphors to the extreme, we could say that, to his credit, TAXI has grown tenfold and evolved into a network, with Ron invested in providing a strong financial balance sheet. Or that Ron earned his previous experience at Ralston Purina and Gucci Timepieces. Or that his biggest

dividend has been TAXI being named one of Canada's 50 best managed companies every year since 2003. But Ron doesn't need plays on words to describe his always refreshing perspective and his unwavering support of the creative process.

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