Adapting to the new times

Top 40 alumni share the lessons in leadership and, of equal importance, adaptability, that COVID-19 has thrust upon them. See p. 3-4.
Honouress share sense of purpose

Continued from FP7

Sarah Joyce, senior vice-president, Environment at Sobeys, did just that. During the pandemic, the grocery chain’s cutting-edge online home-delivery service, Voilà, was a lifesaver for many people living in the Greater Toronto Area. Witness: “The platform was in the works before the pandemic, but the projections they were hoping to achieve were three to four years out. Suddenly they had to be ready to go and scale. Sarah was able to execute and make it happen.”

Another key quality of this year’s honouress: they have a clear sense of purpose and believe in what they do. Amelia Warren, a global leader in the production of wholesome, minimally processed ready-to-eat snacks for children, believes that running a more healthy and sustainable business could do wonders for our young people. “You can’t help but be optimistic about the future when you see the kids,” she says. Warren has taken the time to leverage her global movement to give every person the knowledge, skills and tools to cook and eat well.

Warren believes that if we change what is on our plates, we can change our lives – and the world. She has been named one of Canada’s Top 40 Under 40 for 2021, and is the recipient of the Impact and Influence award, recognizing individuals who use their influence to make the world a better place.

The 2021 Top 40 honouress were selected from 1,200 nominations, making this year’s class one of the most competitive in the awards’ 15-year history. The Top 40 honourees were selected based on their achievements in four of the Top 40 selection criteria:

1. Vision and Innovation
2. Impact and Influence
3. Social Responsibility
4. Leadership

“Snowbird is more than a business for those leaders,” says Freeborough. “Their passion is to serve and make a difference around us. To think about the impact they’ve already had, the trajectory they’re on, and what’s possible is exciting. We have a lot going on as a country.”

This year, we believe that these women have the ability and passion to lead, inspire and support young leaders across the country. We celebrate them and appreciate the thoughtful stories,” says Freeborough. “These Top 40 leaders are committed to Top 40 and have a clear sense of purpose. We are at technology-powered talent recruitment at all levels.

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NEW-WORLD NAVIGATION
Top 40 alumni share their lessons in adaptability

MARY TERESA BITTI
President/Co-CEO

The term “unprecedented change” has been used a lot through the pandemic. To- day, as the world turns in to recovery, National Post turned to Top 40 alumni to learn how they navigated the pandemic and what it takes to adapt.*

Mary Teresa Bitti, ambassador A principal, The Gupta Group, 2017 Top 40 honouree

Through the pandemic, Reetu Gupta was CEO of The Easton's Hotel Group, the hospitality arm of The Gupta Group. The industry was one of the hardest hit during the pandemic, but while many hotels decided to close their doors, Gupta kept 80 per cent of the group’s hotels open.

BEING ALL OF YOUR STARS TOGETHER

I’m a big fan of President Obama. In an interview, he spoke about his Situation Room and how it won’t work with all the high-ups to deal with emergencies. As soon as we knew there was going to be a state of emer- gency, I wanted to make sure we had a state of emergency. I wanted to make sure there was no one calling the shots. We had Zoom because things were changing so quickly. No one person has every solution but when you have all of your all-stars in one room, it’s amazing the magic that can happen.

STAY TRUE TO YOUR VALUES

When I was thinking about how to adapt, I was think- ing about maximizing revenue. I was thinking about maximizing the safety and happiness of our team and guests. When travel stopped and hotel occupancy dropped 80 per cent, we decided to do everything we could to keep our doors open. We redefined our strategy to find domestic business. I also started Pro- ject Kindness. We donated all the food the hotels couldn’t use to Second Harvest, which donated it to shelters and people in need in the GTA.

We also helped procure masks for the University Health Network, senior citizens and retirement com- munities. It gave people hope.

GET CREATIVE

When the provinces list- ed all the industries deemed essential, we used it to fig- ure out which would need hotels. Construction was deemed essential, maybe some of the workers can’t return home, how can we help? We partnered with building owners that wanted to fly their people back home because construction couldn’t stop. We could. We were able to find business, which allowed us to keep our doors open.

Everyone’s mind is open to the fact there is not just one way to do business.

Dr. Vipan Nikore, co-founder, CEO, and chief medical director, TD Health Partners, 2018 Top 40 honouree

Dr. Vipan Nikore, a soft- ware developer turned med- ical doctor, and his co-found- ers launched HomeCare Hub in February 2020. The tech startup includes a platform to help patients find home care agencies on  our society needed. Supporting the home care agencies on our platform was our main thrust. As we started helping other groups, we started to get partner agencies. We built a telehealth platform so we could care for patients re- motely and started helping long-term care facilities and long-term care facilities staff, but we ended up accelerating these pro- jects because they were huge areas of need. We could have made a lot of money doing COVID testing, but that wasn’t our mission. We used our strength in building things and the power of what we had built but in a different way than we had expected. We had to be flexible but we also knew the problems around finding high-quality affordable home care, and the growing need for seniors who want to age at home were not going to go away after the pandemic.

KNOW YOUR PURPOSE

We (the founders) are pur- pose-driven people and any- one who joins the team has to be purpose-driven. Knowing that we were fulfilling a real need for our commu- nity during a once-in-a-dec- ademic crisis helped us find that pure adrenaline and inspira- tion to put the extra hours in to do that work.

ADAPTABILITY IS A MINDSET

This is not a one-size- fits all paradigm. It is a long game. We’ve always done it this way. We see that often in health care. Bringing the right people on board who are adaptable and aligned in terms of val- ues and mission will allow the whole organization to move together. The com- pletely unrelated thing we’ve had to do well is think of the whole organization as one entity and think about the future and what that looks like. We know we’re going to be here for the future, but we ended up accelerating these pro- jects because they were huge areas of need. We could have made a lot of money doing COVID testing, but that wasn’t our mission. We used our strength in building things and the power of what we had built but in a different way than we had expected. We had to be flexible but we also knew the problems around finding high-quality affordable home care, and the growing need for seniors who want to age at home were not going to go away after the pandemic.

THE RUSTICA FAMILY

The Rustica family is proud of your recognition as one of Canada’s Top 40 Under 40. Congratulations on this remarkable achievement and contribution to our business and local community.

RUSTICA

YOUR PASSION AND LEADERSHIP INSPIRE US TO CONTINUE OFFERING THE BEST OF NORTH AMERICA’S FAVOURITE FOOD TO MILLIONS OF PIZZA LOVERS ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

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RUSTICA

Congratulations to CMA President-Elect

Aliko Fontaine

Your health innovations — including SafeSpace Networks — build trust within communities, help marginalized populations use health systems and proactively reduce patient harm. The CMA is grateful for your passion, dedication and expertise.

Top 40 Alumni Share Their Lessons in Adaptability - National Post, Thursday, November 18, 2021

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Aliko Fontaine, on being named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40.

Photos: Reetu Gupta; National Post/Handout; TD Health Partners; Reetu Gupta.

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BUILDING A FUTURE

Continued from FP9

Dennis Campbell, CEO, Ambassador Group Ltd., 2016 Top 40 honouree

We are building a future in tourism and hospitality that is sustainable and in growth mode when the pandemic changed everything.

FOCUS ON YOUR CORE STRENGTHS

We operate tours for cruise ships throughout Atlantic Canada, as well as daily sightseeing tours for the public in Halifax and St. John’s. Before the pandemic, we purchased two new machines to add to our existing six to expand our Harbour Hopper Amphibious Tugboat, a beloved character from CBC’s 1990s children’s television show Theodore Tugboat. A future lifesize replica of Theodore We also began to sell off all cash in every way possible. We also arranged for a total refinance of our company and now have the company secure for the long term.

We went from preparing to grow in dramatically changing consumer habits. We started by preserving what we are truly about. Then our core values is ‘Do the right thing always’. That was our guiding principle. We have a caring culture. We work hard and take care of our people. We are responsible to our internal and external stakeholders. When you look at each individual and team to do the right thing for them. A strong culture drives a business forward and stabilizes it in uncertain times. It’s what allows you to adapt and build confidence.

THE RIGHT LEADERSHIP IS CRITICAL

There have been some especially realizing that we must always ensure we have smart, experienced, open-minded A players leading the company. Our president and VP finance are CPAs who come from the ‘big firm’ world and worked in corporate restructuring. Having that financial acumen internally was critical. We have always taken a very hands-on approach in relationship with our employees, customers, co-investors and lenders. The benefit of investing in relationships and creating strategic partnerships really helped as we navigate the pandemic. For example, we were able to successfully close the lean for St. John’s Terminal development in New York when other deals were falling apart.

WE HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED AT THE LONG TERM

In early 2020, global real estate investor, asset manager and developer Oxford Properties had recently entered a new market in Asia, and was meeting its portfolio into new areas ripe for long-term growth: residential, logistics and life sciences. The pandemic forced us to change our financial model and in growth mode when the pandemic changed everything.

SHARE YOUR PASSION AND FIND PURPOSE

dentalcorp is Canada’s largest and fastest growing network of dental practices. Join a values-based, entrepreneurial company with the knowledge, scale and cutting-edge technology to advance patient care. Explore our corporate and clinical career opportunities, visit dentalcorp.ca/careers.

Dennis Campbell, top, Allison Wolfe, above. SUPPLIED

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FIRST JOBS
AND THEIR IMPACT

DENISE DEVAU & KATHRYN BOOTHBY
Postmedia Network Inc.

First jobs are an important rite of passage for many young people. They help define who we are, what we want to do, and how we might pursue a career. For many, the first job also provided valuable lessons about teamwork, responsibility, and the environment in which they work.

FIRST JOB

Dr. Alika Lafontaine

My first job was when I was seven years old. I was a member of a family medical group called Fifth Generation that worked in a small community in western Canada's Indigenous communities. Performing first aid on the patients taught me two very important lessons: First, when people show up for an event, it's often because they are looking for an emotional experience. Second, when you put your heart into something, it will pay off.

LEADERSHIP

I consider myself to be a type B person. I am not a natural leader, but I have been an effective leader in many situations. You have to learn to communicate with people when working through challenges. You must always have a good sense of where you are going and what you need to do. It's important to be open to feedback and to learn from it. Being a leader is a lot of hard work, but it's also rewarding. You learn a lot about yourself and others in the process.

CAREER CATALYST

The next job I had for about a year was as a cashier at Safeway. It was a great job because I was able to make new friends and learn about the business world. This job also taught me the importance of hard work and dedication.

FIRST JOB

Dr. Alika Lafontaine

It was always a big deal for me to get a job, especially when I was younger. My first job was working as a line cook at Lick's Home Burgers. I loved cooking hamburgers and trying different recipes. I worked there for about four months over the summer.
Recognition can help serve others.

Continued from previous page

TOP 40 IMPACT

I did not see myself as one of Canada’s Top 40 but a colleague I’ve known for 10 years nominated me. I’m incredibly humbled because people who grow up in the community I didn’t get recognized for things like that. Generally speaking, people in under-served communities don’t get awards, recognized for things like the outcomes. I hope these people will be seen as a result of this award. Through that experience I’ve met amazing mentors and coaches over the last 10 to 15 years and am incredibly thankful for them.

First Job

I grew up in a very supportive and loving environment. I’m a big believer in giving back, helping others learn and grow is what matters the most to me. I’ve always been interested in retail. As a student I worked at a local mall. I was always in touch with your customers. That has helped in the project I am working on today at Loblaw.

Career Catalyst

What I began working as an associate at Roots, I had no idea at the time that would kick-start my professional career in retail. Through that experience I learned very early on the importance of front-line teamwork. It gave me direct interaction with customers.

An important lesson was that in a customer-facing industry like ours, those people are the face of the brand. After doing my undergraduate degree in business, I did a lot of management consulting for a hotel chain to help find growth strategies. But I realized I really wanted to work inside an organization, driving change from within rather than just being an advisory service. That ultimately helped me work on their new retail, experiential strategies. I always connected with retail down to designing exceptional experiences. Whether you’re a cashier at Burger King or an associate at Roots, you are always in touch with your customers. That has helped in the project I am working on today at Loblaw.

Leadership

As a leader I want everyone to be inspired by Fishbowl’s vision to be the No. 1 e-commerce business in Canada. I understand and value the importance of front-line teamwork, including our front-line associates. I’m a big believer in giving back and helping others learn and grow is what matters the most to me. I’ve always been interested in retail. As a student I worked at a local mall. I was always in touch with your customers. That has helped in the project I am working on today at Loblaw.

Celebrating leaders who make a difference.

What an awesome accomplishment being named one of Canada’s Top 40 Under 40. Everyone across the Anomaly family is proud of your outstanding achievement.

Thank you for your inspiration, commitment and dedication to Anomaly: our values, our people, our clients and our community. You truly are an Anomaly. Keep raising the bar.

Congratulations Candace Bolrand

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Continued on next page

FP12 nationalpost.com NATIONAL POST, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2021

First Job

Other than being a lawyer by trade, my only other work was as a sailing instructor during summers as a teenager. The sailing school program was based at the Royal Newfoundland Yacht Club almost like a day camp for about 40 children, some as young as 6–10 years old. Children arrived at 8 a.m. and I, along with other program leaders, taught them the theory of sailing before taking them out on a boat into the ocean to put into practice what they had been taught. I have always been a huge part of my life.
Continued from previous page

My grandfather was very interested and taught me about the environment and how it affected the air quality. I have always loved the beauty of the outdoors, and as a child, I spent a lot of time in nature. I was always interested in science, and I would often read books about it. I was also very interested in the environment and how it could be affected by human activity.

When I was a young girl, I had a lot of ideas about what I wanted to be when I grew up. I was always interested in the environment, and I would often read books about it. I was also very interested in the environment and how it could be affected by human activity.

As I grew older, I realized that I wanted to make a difference in the world. I decided to study environmental science, and I did well in my studies. I was always interested in the environment, and I would often read books about it. I was also very interested in the environment and how it could be affected by human activity.

I continued my education by going to university, where I studied environmental science. I did well in my studies, and I was always interested in the environment, and I would often read books about it. I was also very interested in the environment and how it could be affected by human activity.

After I graduated, I started my own environmental consulting firm. I was always interested in the environment, and I would often read books about it. I was also very interested in the environment and how it could be affected by human activity.

I have had a lot of experience in the environmental field, and I have been able to help many people with their environmental needs. I have always been interested in the environment, and I would often read books about it. I was also very interested in the environment and how it could be affected by human activity.

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