

CANADIAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION AWARDS 2006

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JOHN TORELLA
GETS LIFETIME NOD



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John Torella

Retail marketing guru continues to be Canadian industry's go-to guy

It's hardly possible to consider retail marketing and branding in Canada without reflecting on the man many say helped put it on the map. Retail expert John Torella, senior partner and senior consultant at J.C. Williams Group, Toronto, has enjoyed an illustrious marketing career – both on the front lines and behind the scenes.

“John has been in this business a long time and has always been totally dedicated to learning and to adapting. He's a global thinker with global experience, so from a Canadian perspective he's been a beacon: he's not only helped Canadian businesses grow, he's done so by understanding best practices around the world and brining them back to Canada,” says Diane Brisebois, president of the Retail Council of Canada (RCC) in Toronto.

Ironically, Torella – this year's Canadian Marketing Association Awards Lifetime Achievement Award-winner – is currently in India, scoping out more business opportunities.

“He's a brilliant man who has carved out an outstanding career: he's made such a contribution to the development of marketing, and particularly branding. We had to acknowledge this body of work and lifelong achievement,” says John Gustavson, president of the Canadian Marketing Association.

Torella is a graduate of a long list of esteemed institutions including the Kellogg Graduate School, Schulich School of Business, Harvard Business School, and Tuck School.

He began his retailing career in 1970 with T. Eaton Company of Canada, and rose to VP of marketing when the company dominated the Canadian retail marketplace. Under his direction, Eaton's launched a series of innovative campaigns, including the award-winning “Uncrate the Sun” spring launch for which he was named Marketing Man of the Year by the National Retail Merchants Association (NRMA) in Washington, DC.

Torella then entered the agency business as head of Vickers and Benson Retail. He drove break-through campaigns for McDonalds, Bank of Montreal, and Ontario Tourism. And after a brief stint as GM of Grey Canada's Retail Division, he joined J.C. Williams Group.

At J.C. Williams, Torella has served as the ultimate brand advisor to some of the best retailers in North America, including the LCBO, Holt Renfrew, Birks, Etam Group (Netherlands), and Lands' End (U.S.). He's also earned an international reputation for his thought leadership in branding, shared via dynamic presentations and several books on the subject, such as *Stop Talking Start Doing Retail Branding* and *Whole-Being Retail Branding*.

Torella also has a long history as an active volunteer in the marketing industry. As a member – now chair – of the strategic planning and branding committee of the CMA, Torella has been instrumental in helping the organization refocus itself, adds Gustavson. Through positions on committees with organizations such as the RCC and the Retail Advertising and Marketing Association (RAMA), he has sought to advance industry knowledge.

“John has been a constant at the Retail Council of Canada with our events. He has been a good friend to the association in regards to supporting retail and marketing – he is always extremely generous with his time, knowledge and insight,” says Brisebois. “Over and above his unquestionable talent, what stands out for me is his incredible generosity to the industries that have been his bread and butter. He has given back more than he's received.”