

# PUT IT DOWN IN WRITING

Leading industry publication working hard to enhance its relevance and viability in the new digital age

While it would be all too easy to dismiss the popular ongoing “print is dead” narrative as fake news, it’s fair to say that the rumours of the medium’s pending demise may have been greatly exaggerated, at least for the time being.

Despite the sadly shocking closures of many once-indispensible daily newspapers and consumer magazines in recent years, some venerable publications—particularly in the B2B (business-to-business) industry segment—are happy to be bucking the trend by refusing to fade away quietly into the night.

As you would expect, the *Canadian Packaging* magazine is both proud and humbled to remain one of those enduring keepers of the faith.

Started up back in 1947 by former Canadian magazine publishing giant **Maclean Hunter Limited**, the 78-year-old publication remains as committed as ever to fulfilling its original mandate of keeping Canada’s packaging community informed of the latest news, trends and developments impacting their day-to-day business with high-quality editorial product both in print and, increasingly, in the fast-growing digital domain.

“Today, Canadian Packaging offers the consumer packaged goods and packaging converting markets a plethora of print and digital products reaching tens of thousands of packaging decision-makers in the food, beverage, drug, cosmetic, household product and industrial markets,” says senior publisher Stephen Dean, who originally joined the magazine as a sales rep back in 1981.

Says Dean: “Canadian Packaging serves its audience with a combination of packaging news from around the world and a keen eye to what packaging strategies and practices work best for the CPG (consumer packaged goods) companies across the country.

“Our readers continuously commend us on our detailed coverage of the



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packaging materials, containers and technology used across the full range of companies—from energetic startups to established multinationals.”

In addition to his daily job responsibilities as the magazine’s senior publisher, Dean has also served as director on the Central (Ontario) Chapter of Canada’s leading packaging industry organization **PAC Packaging Consortium** for most of the past decade.

As he relates, the special relationship nurtured over the years between the magazine and the 70-year-old industry group can be traced right back to the founding days of its predecessor **Packaging Association of Canada (PAC)**.

“According to popular folklore, it was actually Canadian Packaging editor at the time, Charlie Cornell, who came up with the idea to start an association to

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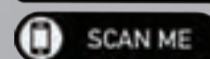
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serve the packaging profession in Canada back in 1949,” Dean recounts.

After selling the merits of the idea to his boss and future Maclean Hunter president Donald Hunter, Cornell invited a group of select packaging suppliers, end-users, retailers and other industry stakeholders to convene at the Maclean-Hunter headquarters in downtown Toronto, where the group formed an action plan to bring the proposed association into being the following year.

Since then, *Canadian Packaging* and PAC have collaborated on countless joint initiatives for the benefit of both the PAC membership and the Canadian packaging community at large, while duly respecting each other’s autonomy, interests and spheres of influence.

“Canadian Packaging is a proud member of PAC,” Dean asserts, “and we are committed to working hand-in-hand with the association to promote its services to its members and to encourage others to become members.”

Ironically, the *Canadian Packaging* magazine has in many respects experienced the impact of accelerated industry consolidation that mirrors the overall thinning of the ranks within Canada’s packaging in recent years as a result of relentless industry-wide M&A (mergers and acquisitions) activity on a global scale.

After Maclean Hunter was acquired by an integrated media giant **Rogers Communications** in 1994, *Canadian Packaging* was eventually sold to Vancouver-headquartered B2B media group **Glacier Media** in 2011, which in turn sold the publication to its current owner, **Annex Business Media**, three years

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later.

While these ownership changes naturally had some impact on some of the magazine’s day-to-day activities, most long-time subscribers to the publication probably remain oblivious to those changes, which is exactly how it should be for any magazine aspiring to retain and grow its readership base.

If anything, the magazine’s mutually beneficial relationship with PAC Packaging Consortium has only grown stronger over the years, according to its editor George Guidoni, who joined the publication during its Rogers Media days in 1997.

“As an editorial resource, PAC provides unrivaled opportunities for making new contacts within the industry and helping us stay on top of packaging trends and hot-button issues impacting the industry: from integrating printed electronics into packaging, for example, to packaging sustainability and the impact of government legislations,” Guidoni says.

“No wonder it is such a highly respected voice of authority on the Canadian packaging business around the world among its peers and counterparts,” Guidoni points out.

“The PAC has been absolutely instrumental in advancing the cause of sustainable packaging across Canada and beyond for the last decade,” he notes.

“Its close collaboration with Walmart Canada around the turn of the last decade, focusing on retailer’s then-revolutionary Walmart Packaging Scorecard, produced several outstanding two-day conferences attracting hundreds of attendees from across the country, year after year, to listen to the world’s foremost thought leaders on packaging sustainability, along with senior executives from some of the world’s biggest CPG and retail companies,” Guidoni adds.

“And that’s just one example of many outstanding initiatives that PAC has implemented under the leadership of president Jim Downham to reinforce its status as the undisputed champion of Canada’s packaging community and its causes.”

Adds Dean: “We find it most interesting to see how PAC has evolved as a leader in training, education, and accreditation and certifications in sustainability and food safety.

“We believe that PAC has much to offer in advocacy in areas such as sustainability, plastics and packaging end-of-life, while maintaining a packaging material neutrality that treats all packaging materials and styles as equals, whereby each has something to offer for the greater good of the industry and society at large,” he points out.

“The biennial PAC conventions, along with newer events such as the One of 100 branding conferences in New York City, continuously offer high-quality speakers and networking experiences that cannot be easily duplicated in the global packaging community,” Dean adds.

“With the growing demands and expectations being placed on CPG companies and their packaging suppliers by consumers and retailers,” Dean concludes, “we believe that PAC has more than ever a critical role to play in educating, rallying and advocating on behalf of one of the most utilitarian and useful inventions of the modern age—packaging.”

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