



REKINDLING YOUR CREATIVITY

Canadians know all too well that hot, sunny weather comes at a premium, making the arrival of summer a hard time to focus on work. The call of patios, pints and flip-flops has a way of cutting through the thickest boardroom walls.

And so it should. Summer is a precious opportunity to rejuvenate: to refresh the brain and free up mental space for new creativity. There are many ways to take advantage of what summertime has to offer -- and stay connected to your business at the same time.

Flex your flex. Of all the times to take advantage of mobility and flexwork, summer is tops. Swap your desk for the dock, do calls in your bathing suit. (In fact, it helps to imagine everyone on the phone is in their swimwear, too! No doubt some of them are.)

Stockpile to stay ahead. Even when you're going to be unplugged and offline, you can still maintain connection to your clients and partners. Pre-compose tweets, for example, to keep your feed active even while you're off swaying in a hammock in the breeze.

LINEUP

FEATURE: Get creative!
PUNC'D: Summer words
PRACTICE POINT: Out of office
POP: Page turners

SHOUT-OUT CONGRATULATING KENT MACDONALD

Our writing team was proud to work with Kent MacDonald during his 16-year career at Algonquin College, supporting the institution through an exciting period of strategic visioning and committed action. Dr. MacDonald ended his term as President this July to take on the leadership of his alma mater, St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. We wish him a safe move and all the best in his new role.

CONTENT MATTERS ANNUAL REPORT SEASON WRAP-UP

Annual reports got dynamic this year. We helped several clients tell their annual stories online, including [Sustainable Development Technology Canada](#), the [House of Commons](#) and [Alcatel-Lucent](#). And in a fresh approach to print, we wrote

Bring a notebook. When people wind down, new ideas often start to flood in. Be ready to catch them! Reflect on the past year. Take stock and think about what's on the horizon. What will your corporate story be in the coming months -- and how will you want to tell it? Open up to inspiration: you'll not only come back refreshed but also ready to leap back into action.

What are your summer rejuvenation secrets? Tweet them at @ascribeinc, #creativereboot.

PUNC'D

HEADING TO THE HUT FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

This special edition of PUNC'D looks at where some of our favourite summer words come from.

Cottage / Cabin

What do you call the house on the lake you visit on long weekends? The answer probably depends on where you live. Out west, people go to the "cabin". In eastern Canada, they head to the "cottage". Like many things Canadian, the word choice boils down to regional history. Cottages traditionally referred to peasants' farms; cabins were loggers' shacks in the woods. But really they mean the same thing: cottage comes from the Old French cote; cabin from the Medieval Latin capanna -- and both translate to "hut". Somehow, though, we think that one won't catch on.

Bikini

Louis Réard was no doubt looking for an explosive reaction when he created this revealing swimsuit in 1946 -- which may be why he chose to name it after Bikini Atoll, the site of the first peacetime nuclear weapon test. Any association with the word "bombshell", however, is purely coincidental. The Marshallese name for the island, Pikinni, in fact means "surface of coconuts".

Speedo

What's in a name? In the case of "Speedo", pretty much everything. This bit of swimwear was created by an Australian hosiery company in 1927 as a "racerback" suit with open shoulders and an exposed back for greater range of motion -- making it a favourite with competitive swimmers. The name was adopted because, well, the suit

the [Royal Canadian Mint's](#) latest annual in a streamlined, cinematic format. We also added new clients to our annual report roster this year, including the Canadian Electricity Association and the Competition Bureau.

CANADA'S ANTI-SPAM LEGISLATION

Canada's new anti-spam law, CASL, came into effect on July 1. Anyone added to a company's email list since then must give express consent to be included. Businesses have three years to obtain express consent from people on their existing mailing lists. Following our initial mailout in June, we will reach out again in the coming weeks to anyone whose consent we have not yet received. Watch for your next invitation to keep getting *asterisk** and other Ascribe updates. We look forward to keeping in touch!

made you go fast. Today's one-piece Speedo briefs (whose nicknames we'll leave aside) didn't actually debut until 1956.

PRACTICE POINT

WRITING THE PERFECT VACATION AUTO-REPLY

The best part about going on a vacation is letting everyone know you're going. Part of that means creating an out-of-office auto-reply to keep your partners, clients and co-workers fully informed. But even though your mind may already be at the cottage, you still need to put some thought into your OoO message.

1) Don't gloat. Remember that while you'll be lounging on a beach or BBQ'ing poolside, the people getting your email are stuck in the office. They don't need another reminder of what they're not doing outside.

2) Understandably, an impending trip can cause us to revert to the childlike giddiness of middle school summer vacation. But if you catch yourself wRiTInG yOuR EmAiL like a pre-teen on the Internet for the first time, it might end up looking like a ransom note.

3) Be careful of colour overload. **A little brightness can certainly communicate your excitement.** But if you go too far, your message **might begin resembling the menu at a Baskin Robbins.**

4) Don't be too formal or stilted. You want to look like you want this vacation, not need it. If your emails have the syntax of 2001's HAL post-meltdown, you may come off burned out.

5) Watch your font. What better way to contrast the harsh, rigid, angular structures of traditional business correspondence than the whimsical, bubbly curves of, say, *Comic sans*? The answer is anything. Literally anything is better than an email apparently modeled on the instructions for a bouncy castle at a birthday party.

POP

THE CULTURE FILE

Summer reads

Whether you're at the beach, campsite or your own backyard, one of the best parts of summer is cracking open a good (or so-bad-it's-good) book. Here are some of Ascribe's favourite summertime novels.

Steve: Anything by Michael Crichton: *Jurassic Park*, *Congo*, *Sphere*... I've re-read these so many times since I was a kid. Not exactly the pinnacle of literature, but definitely a fun way to spend a few hours in a hammock on a warm summer day.

Al: Summers are hot. Like really, really hot. Especially if you're at the beach or at someone's AC-free cottage. That's why I like to regulate my temperature with H.P. Lovecraft's story, *At the Mountains of Madness*. It's a short little Antarctica-set cosmic horror tale that keeps me cool by evoking frozen winds and the frigid emptiness of abject terror.

Natalie: I've been catching up on books I should have read by now but haven't, like *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini. I found it particularly striking given all of violence against women that's been making headlines lately -- really made me appreciate how lucky I am to be a woman in Canada.

Andrew: It seems like my 'summer reading' always stretches across multiple summers lately. This year I'm looking to wrap up Northrop Frye's *Words with Power* and dig into his *Anatomy of Criticism* -- to keep the writing brain sharp.

Dale: I get mocked for it but my cottage return-to each year is Stephen Covey's *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. Summer respite always presents a time for reflection on life, family, values and aspirations for ongoing growth and self-realization. Otherwise, Nancy Drew and Harry Potter are always fun to curl up with -- with the kids, of course!

Krynn: *Barney's Version* by Mordecai Richler is superbly entertaining and quasi-autobiographical. Richler was not only a gifted Canadian author, screenwriter and essayist, but he also had a unique story and wasn't afraid to push the envelope or speak his opinion.

Kristopher: Ideally, summertime is a great,

unpredictable joyride. You have to be ready to get up and go at any time-so I keep my reading short, light and entertaining. Essay collections from Chuck Klosterman, Sloane Crosley, and John Jeremiah Sullivan have been dominating my summer reading for years. Chuck's *Eating the Dinosaur* is a great place to start.

What's your go-to summertime book? Tweet us your favourites at @ascribeinc, #summerbooks.

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