



YEAR IN REVIEW

2020

 **NORTHERN**

Positioned for Growth



2020 IN REVIEW

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A Message From Our President

Reflecting on 2020, we are nothing short of extremely grateful. Grateful for the resilience of our team, our clients, and our community. In a year filled with turmoil, it is humbling to see how much we have all grown, both personally and professionally.

Over the last year, in a time of extreme uncertainty, we decided to take a bold step forward by uniting two leading agencies, Northern Commerce and Digital Echidna. The decision is one that we are proud to say has been a driving force for our success and growth in 2020.

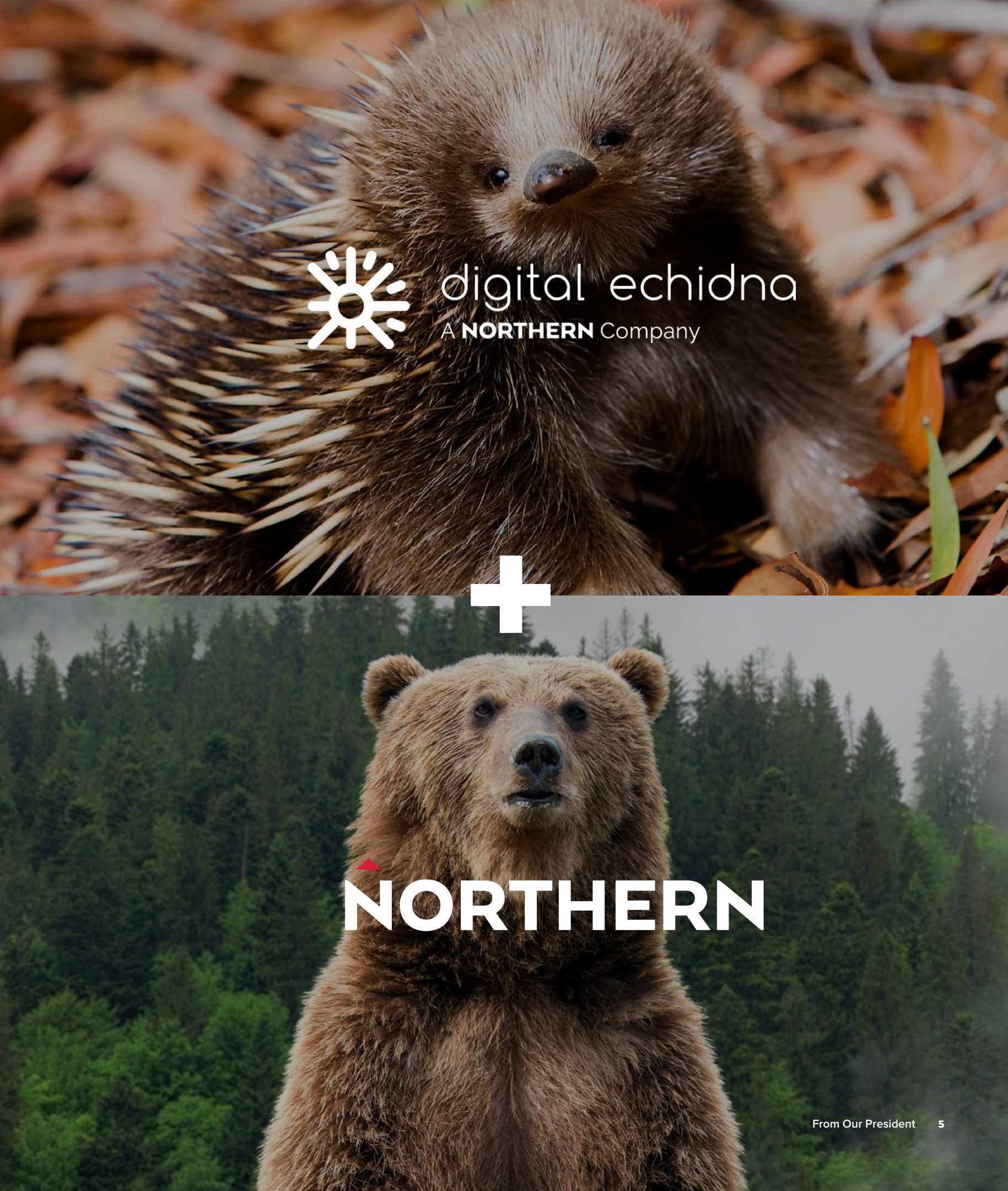
As a combined agency specializing in digital experience, customer engagement, and commerce enablement, we have been able to help our clients this past year as they expedite their journey to digital transformation. Looking forward to 2021, we are excited to be at the forefront of digital, and are excited to work with our ambitious partners to continue challenging the status quo.

We thank every one of our clients, partners, and staff, for helping to make this year a monumental one.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Michael DeLorenzi
President






THE NEW NORTHERN


The uniting of two innovative digital agencies under one brand, sets the new Northern apart as a technology leader offering an array of sophisticated digital solutions that deliver scalable growth and award-winning performance for our clients. Powered by strategic partnerships with industry leading technologies, we are poised to provide best-in-class solutions to brands pursuing digital transformation.

Industry Partners


Northern is proud to partner with best-in-class technology platform partners. These partnerships fill the needs for content management systems, scalable hosting, eCommerce platforms, digital marketing, and accessible design—providing unparalleled solutions for our clients.




Adobe/Magento




Salesforce Partner




Acquia Gold Level Partner




Drupal




Shopify




BigCommerce




Facebook Marketing Partner




Google




Siteimprove



Klaviyo Master



Panttheon




AWS Partner Network


And many more...

Certifications


Our team is dedicated to continually learning and improving. In 2020, the Northern team received multiple certifications spanning a variety of digital skills. The new Northern is able to meet the needs of our clients with a depth of expertise and innovation fit for enterprise-level projects.




Acquia Grand Master Certification




Salesforce




AWS Consulting Partner




Magento 2 Certified Developers




Google Analytics




Facebook Blueprint Certified




Professional Certification in Project Management




Registered Graphic Designer




Certified Scrum Master



Google Ads Certified Professional



Nielsen Norman Group UX Certified



Marketo Certified Associate



New Clients

Throughout 2020 we welcomed a variety of new clients across a range of industries. We are excited about our new relationships and look forward to continued collaboration.



Homes Alive Pets



Direct Dial



Fracture



University of Toronto
New College



BN3TH



Lassonde School
of Engineering



NUMI



Booch Kombucha



Unifor



TaskRabbit



CN Tower



Vivino



Ronsco



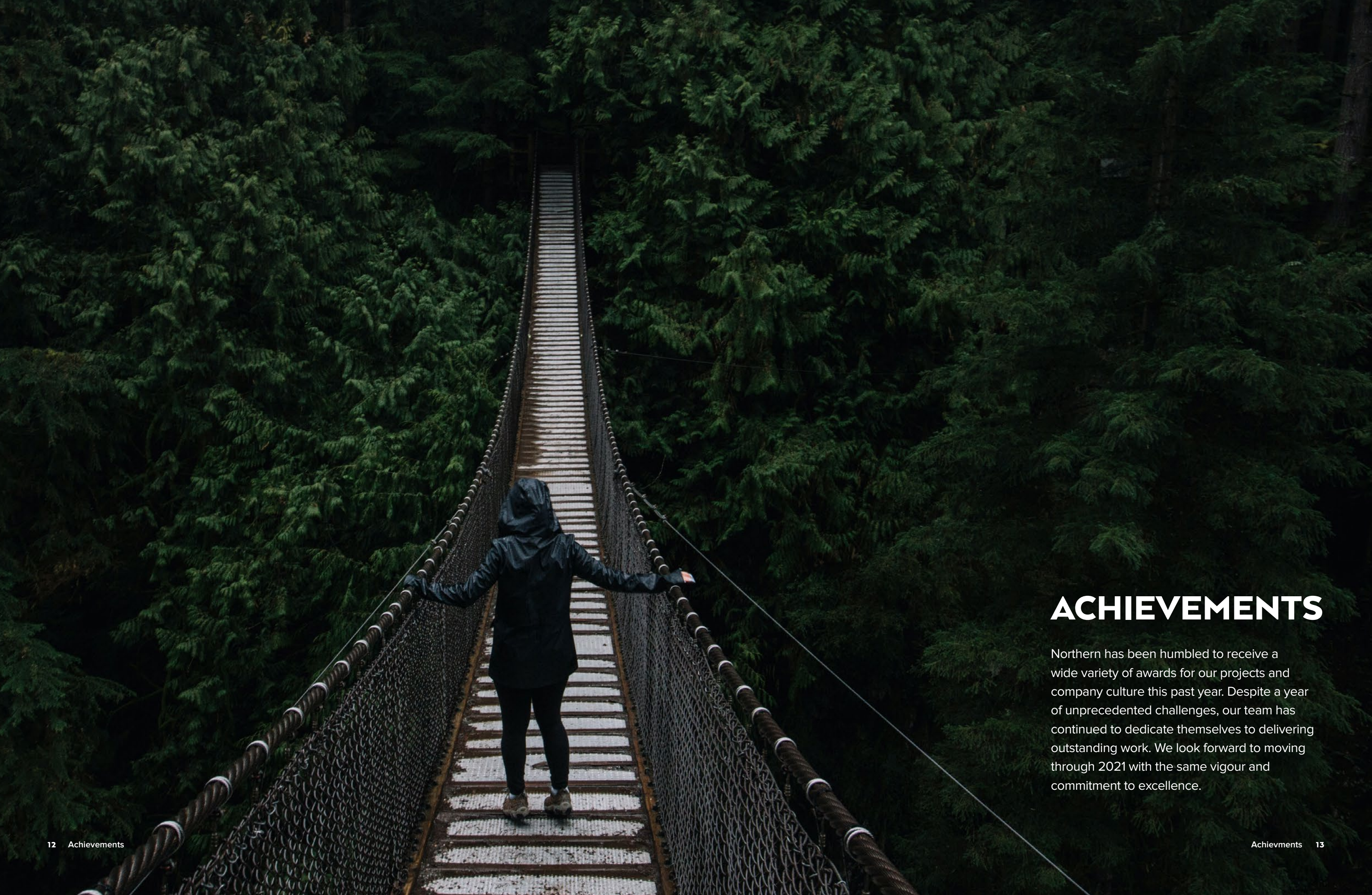
Collective Arts



National Mattress



Parasource



ACHIEVEMENTS

Northern has been humbled to receive a wide variety of awards for our projects and company culture this past year. Despite a year of unprecedented challenges, our team has continued to dedicate themselves to delivering outstanding work. We look forward to moving through 2021 with the same vigour and commitment to excellence.

AWARD SPOTLIGHT

2020 Animal Welfare Leadership and Innovation Award

Northern formed a charitable partnership with Humane Society London & Middlesex (HSLM) through our Northern Cares initiative. Northern helped HSLM rebrand and improve their marketing efforts through a commitment of over \$150,000 worth of in-kind digital services. The complete digital transformation included a comprehensive redesign of the HSLM logo, brand identity, website, and marketing assets.

In the last year, HSLM was able to reach a greater number of individuals in the community and beyond as a result of the brand refresh and stronger online presence.

Due to the impact created by this work, Northern is proud to have been awarded the 2020 Animal Welfare Leadership & Innovation Award for Corporate Social Responsibility.



Awards

Our team has made Northern a certified Great Place to Work®, where we create award-winning projects and make an impact in our community. We are thrilled to have received awards for our commitments in corporate social responsibility and a positive company culture, and to have multiple projects recognized for our innovative solutions.

Great Place to Work-Certified™

Best Workplaces in Ontario,
Great Place to Work® Canada

Virtuoso Award of Excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility (Nature Fresh Farms),
IABC London

Holiday Giveaway Project,
IABC London

Clutch Global Top 1,000 B2B Companies Award, Clutch

Best Large Integrated Search Agency,
Canadian Search Awards

Canada's Top Growing Companies,
Globe & Mail

Canada's Fastest-Growing Companies,
(Growth List + Startup List), Canadian Business

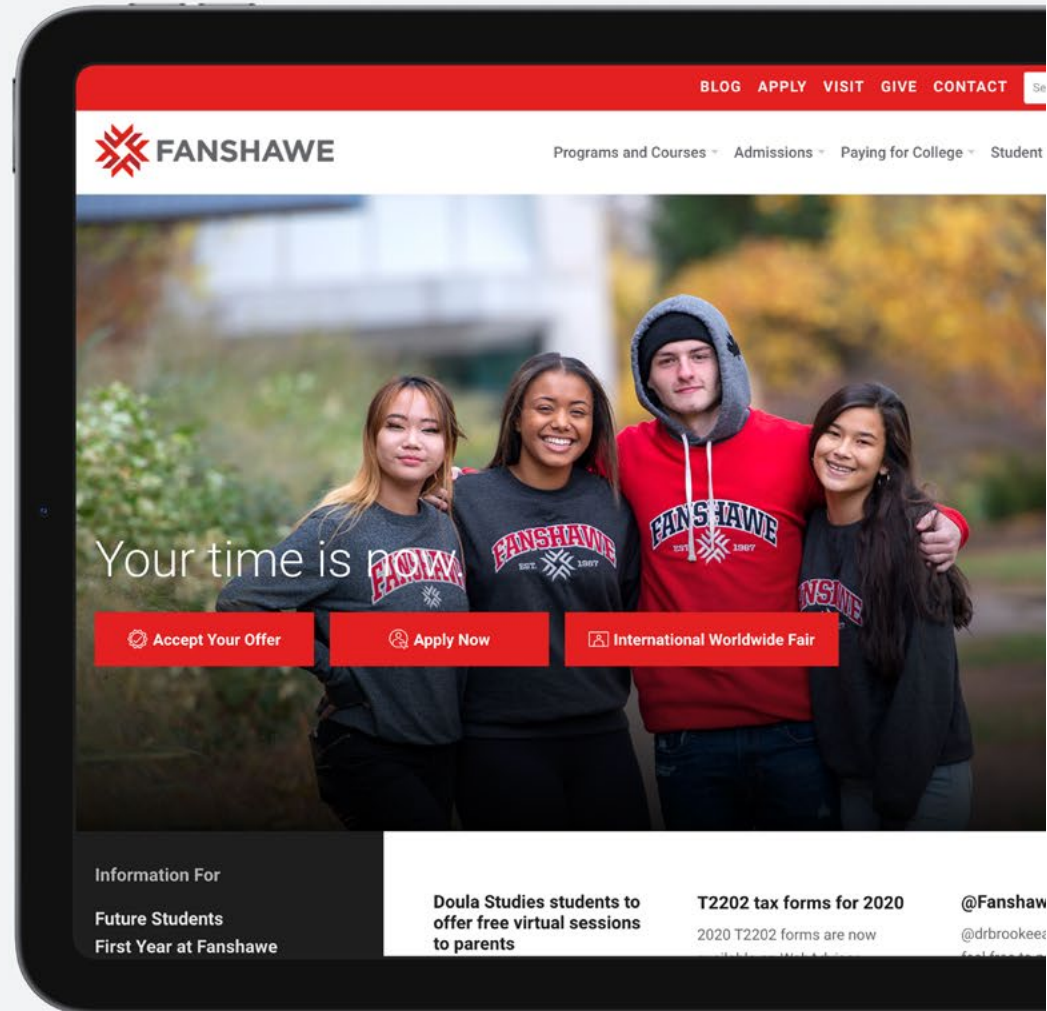
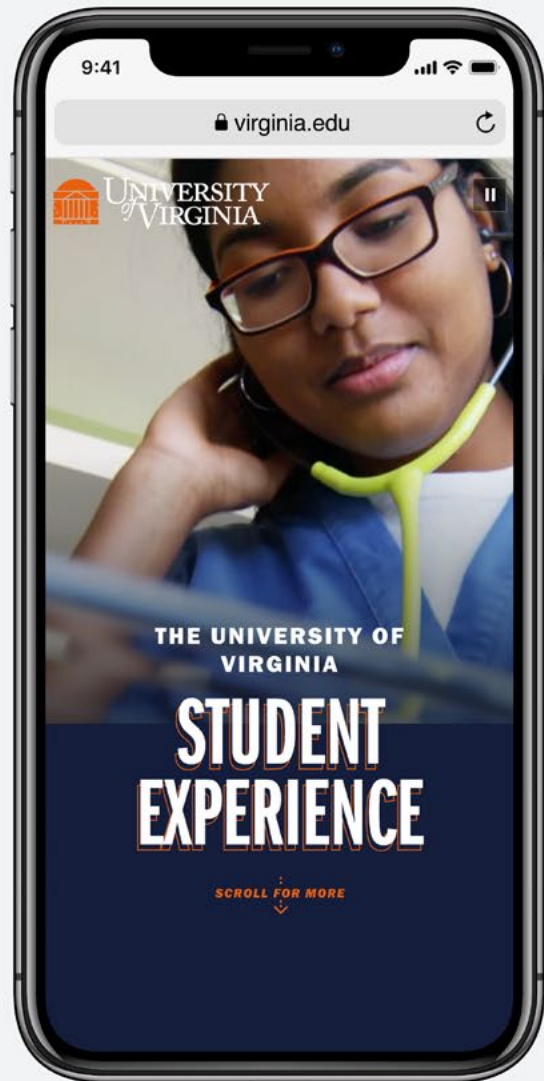
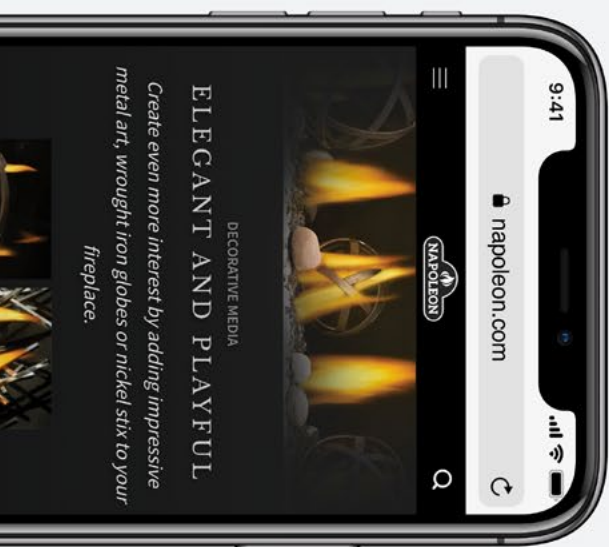
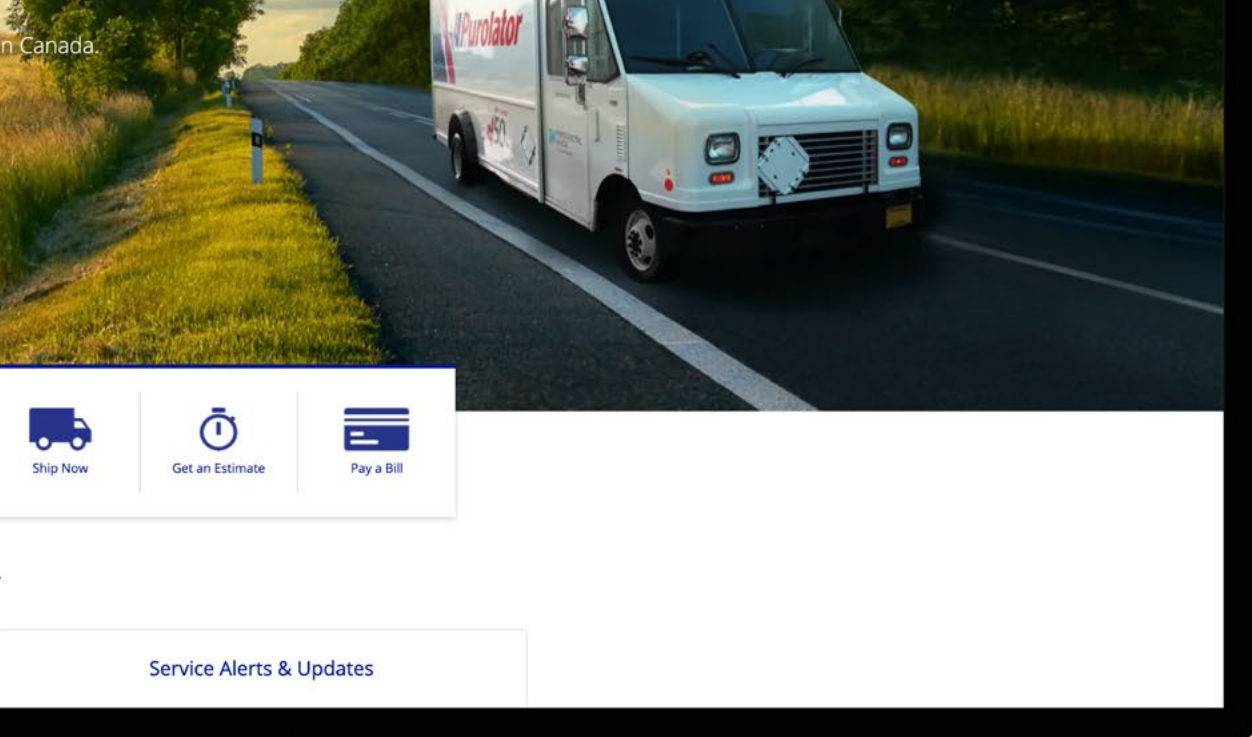
WebAward for Outstanding Achievement in Web Development: University Standard of Excellence (Fanshawe College), Web Marketing Association

WebAward for Outstanding Achievement in Web Development: Outstanding Website (Napoleon Fireplaces), Web Marketing Association

Animal Welfare Leadership and Innovation Award, Humane Canada

Finalist for Innovation in Open Marketing
(Napoleon Fireplaces), Acquia Engage Awards

Finalist for Leader of the Pack: Higher Education (University of Virginia), Acquia Engage Awards

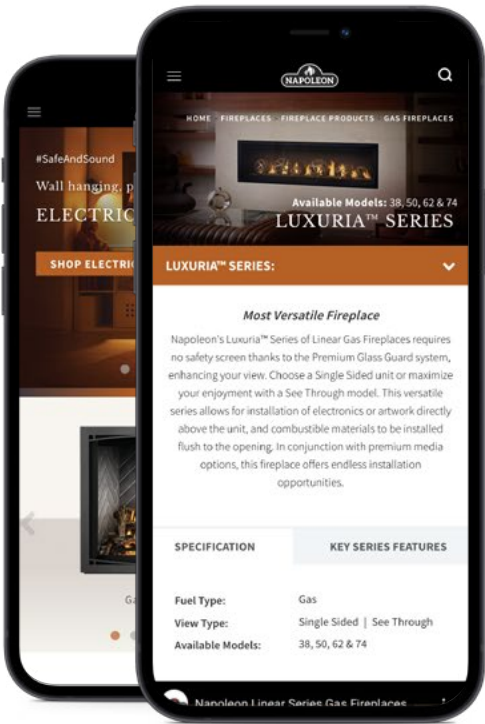
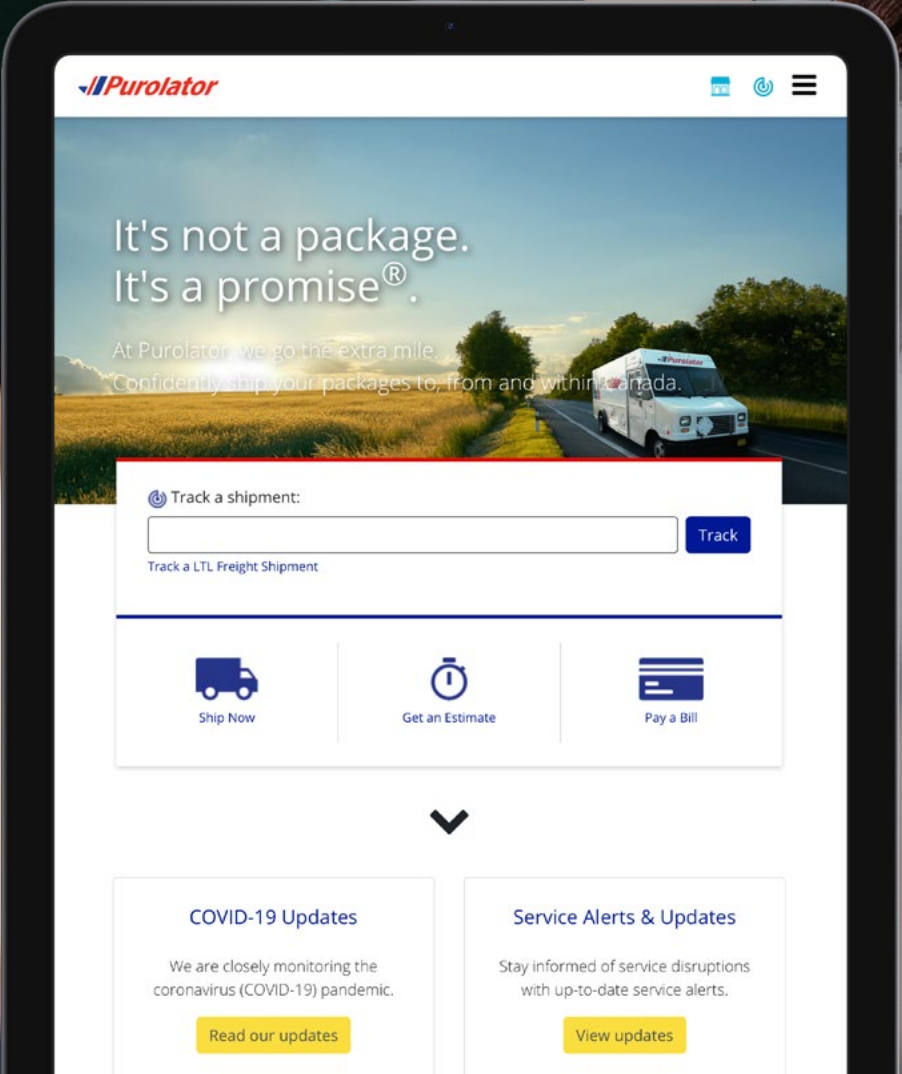


Digital Experiences

A digital experience is more than simply a website, it's personal, it's individual, it's rewarding, it's a delight at every touchpoint. It earns trust and gains loyalty, it's where customers become advocates. We carefully design experiences for our clients with accessibility, security, user experience, information architecture, site performance, external software integrations, and custom development.

Purolator

In six months, we created a new Drupal 8 solution with a responsive design to accommodate a mobile-friendly experience and upgraded accessibility compliance to improve the user experience for everyone. A refined focus on SEO and metadata, the addition of Apache Solr search API, and a new resource hub dramatically increased the amount of information crawled and indexed by search engines.



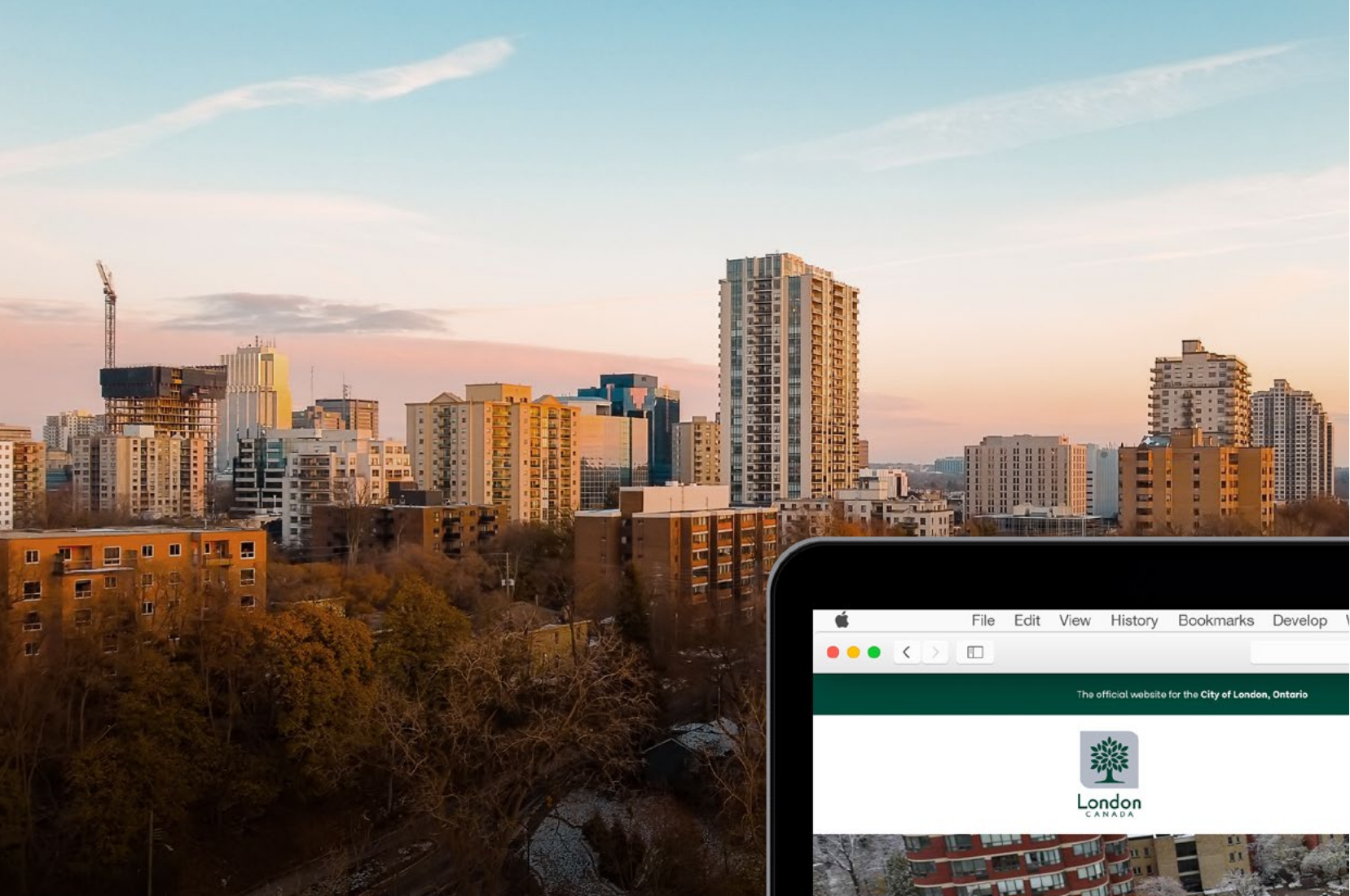
Napoleon Fireplaces

After implementing a Drupal 8 digital experience for Napoleon Grills, we delivered a similar solution for the Napoleon Fireplaces division. The new online experience makes content more searchable and user friendly -- with the addition of Acquia Personalization for scalability to feed marketing campaigns and inform targeted content. IP and regionalization deliver in-context, personalized experiences across several languages and regions.

WSIB

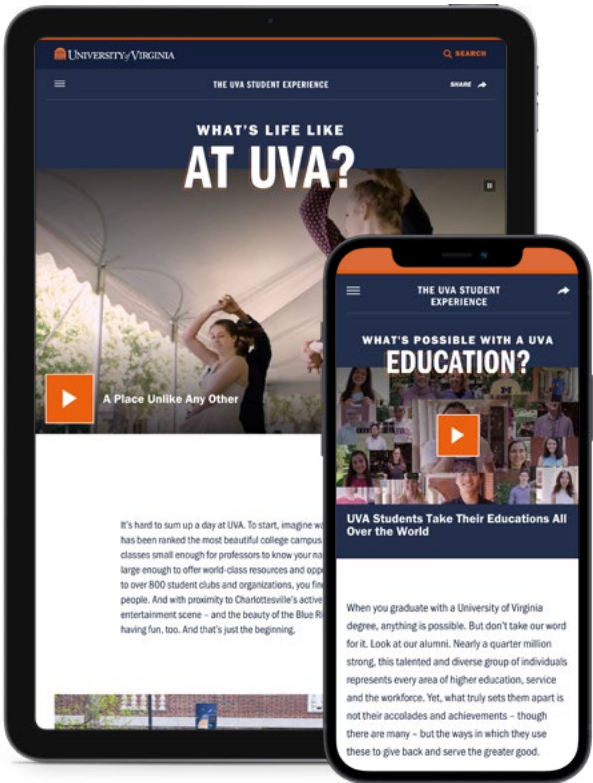
This project included the development of a new Drupal 8 digital experience and online portal on Acquia Cloud. The redesigned experience better equips employers and funders with information on enrollment issues, health and safety standards, and statistics. The online portal delivers an incentive-based health and safety program and eliminates the need for costly paper-based programs.





City of London

Combining community engagement and our recommendations based on best practices and expertise, we created a new digital experience that put users first. Over 800 hours were dedicated to optimizing the user experience, including content strategy, data analysis, AODA accessibility training, and information architecture strategy -- plus 80 hours of UX activities with the community and other stakeholders. The new user experience architecture is service-oriented to help users complete common tasks and access municipal services.

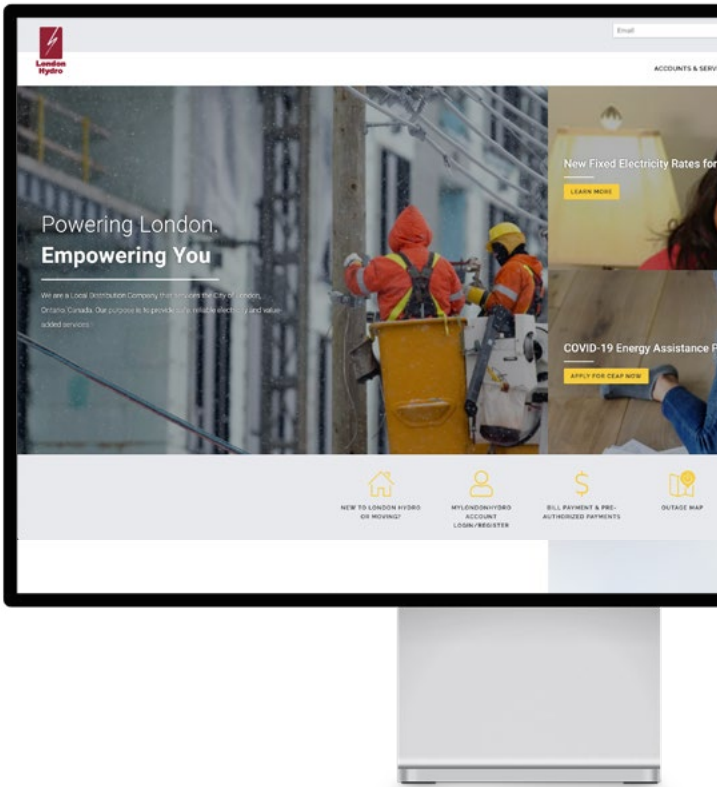


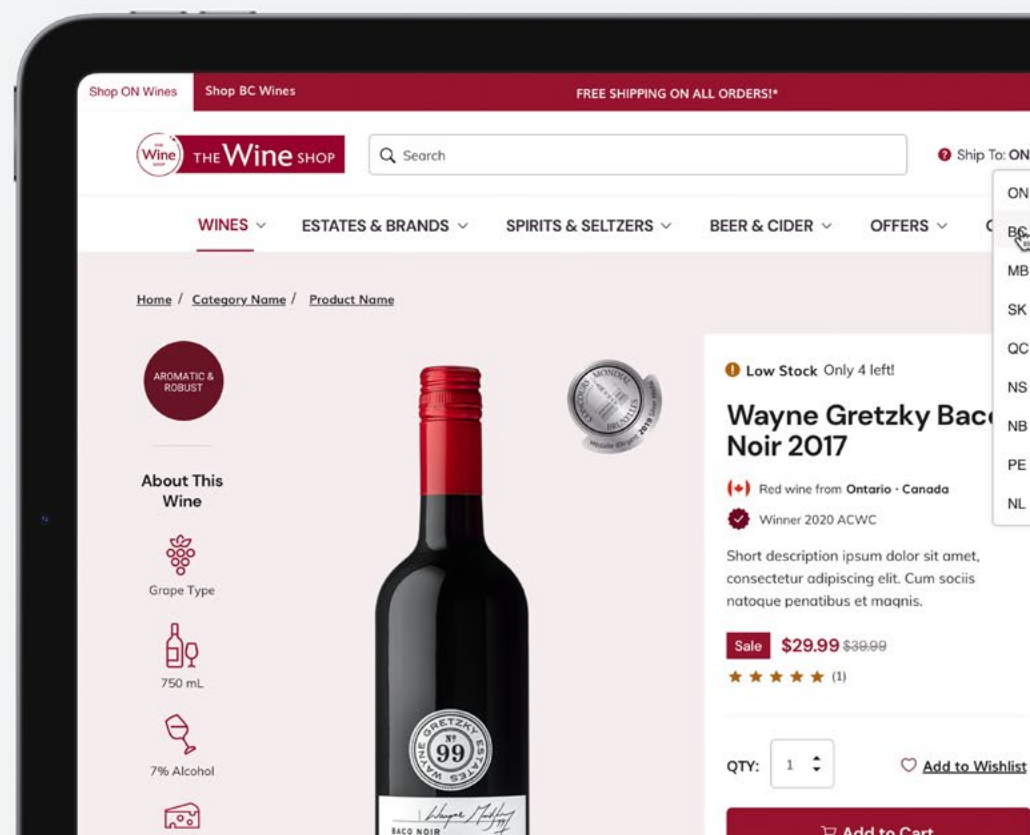
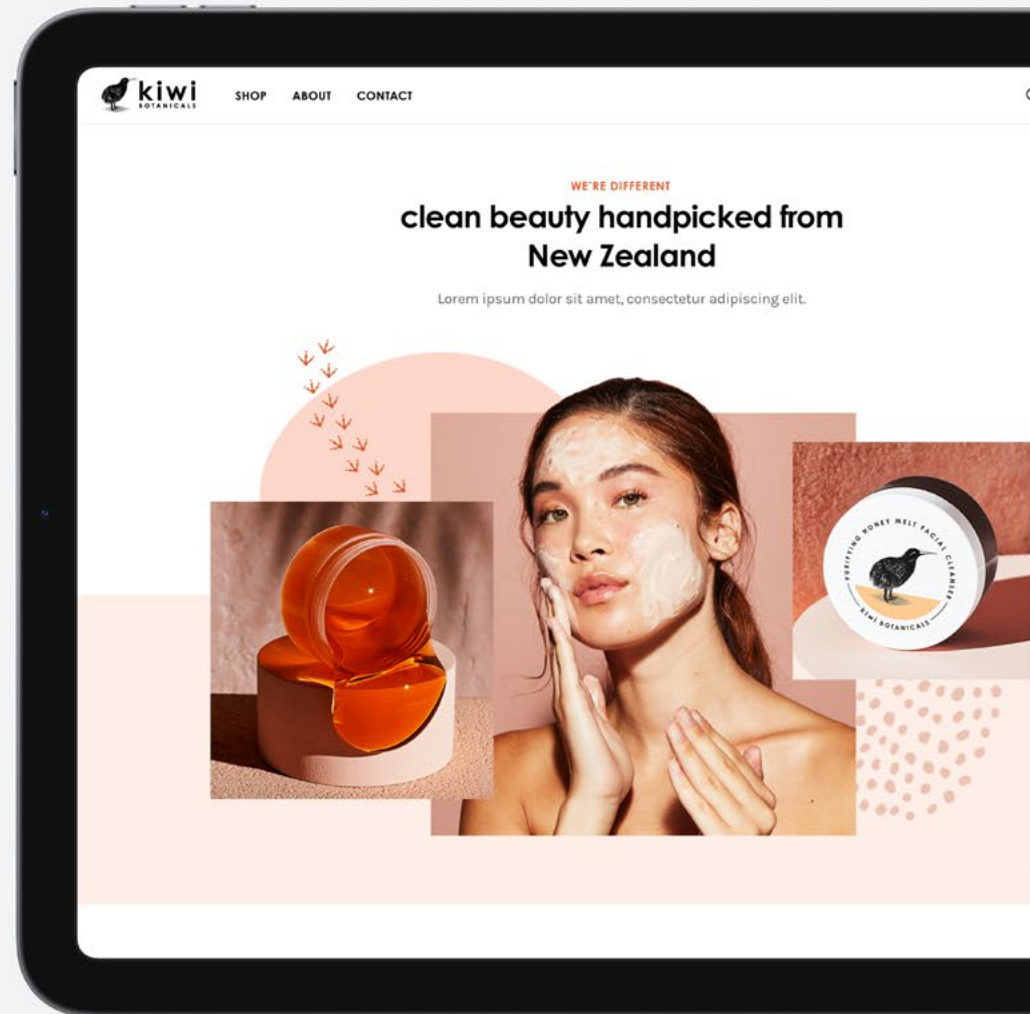
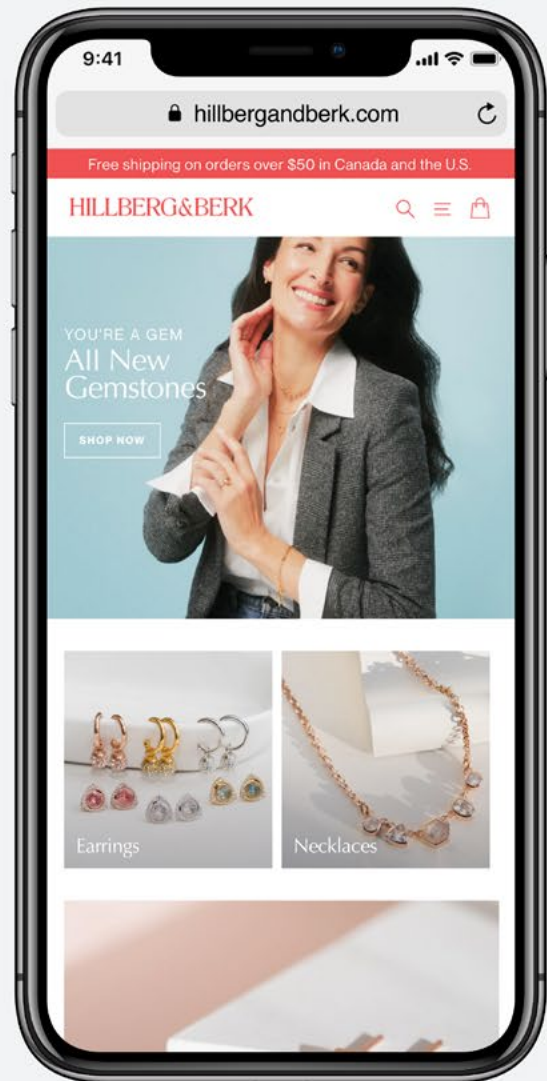
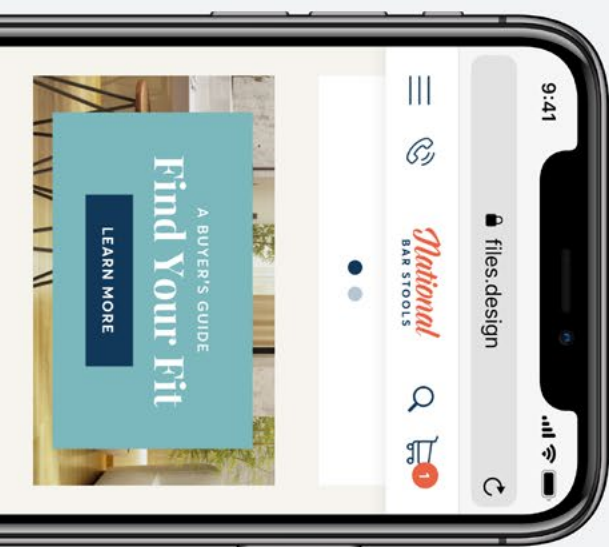
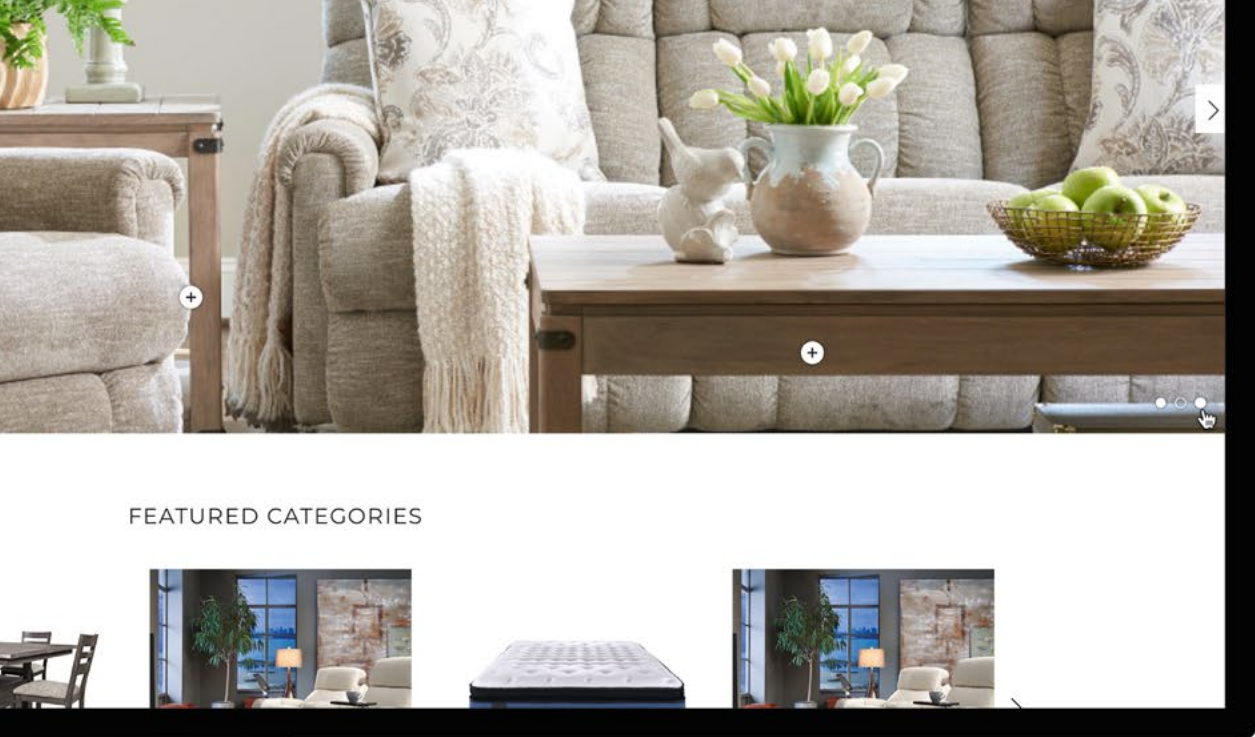
University of Virginia

University of Virginia (UVA) partnered with us to implement Acquia Cloud Site Factory (ACSF) for the migration of over 300 sites. The result was a modern web platform with security and accessibility built-in. Each department now uses its own property with its own users and content, while branding remains consistent across all properties. Users receive a similar experience across the entire university system, rather than having to learn to navigate different paths per department.

London Hydro

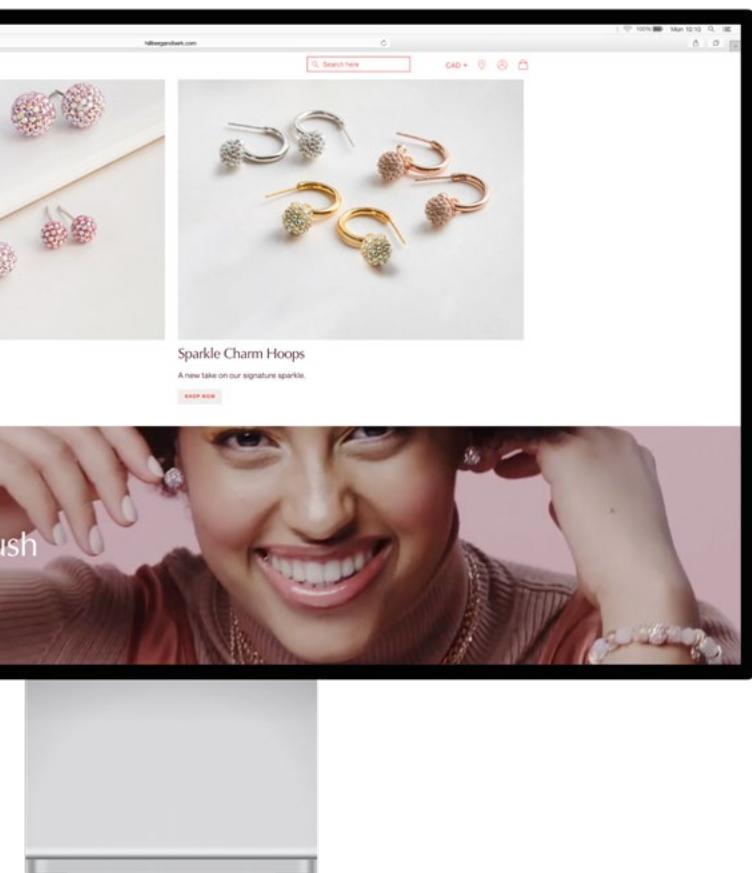
Partnering with London Hydro, we implemented a new Drupal 8, fully responsive, WCAG 2.0 AA compliant solution that delivers content and services to users quickly and with ease. The platform educates customers and helps them understand their energy needs and options. A minimum viable product launched in under one month, which allowed for early user feedback and testing. An integrated Google-powered map of hydro outages was brought to the forefront to keep customers aware with up-to-the-minute data.





Commerce

Commerce transactions are inflection points, it's when the maximal level of attention is paid to a brand—a priority event for every brand, in every industry, and in every vertical. The importance of a seamless customer experience was amplified as eCommerce sales doubled over the past year. From wine to furniture to jewellery and more, Northern launched a wide range of online commerce solutions for clients to help them serve their customers easily and efficiently.

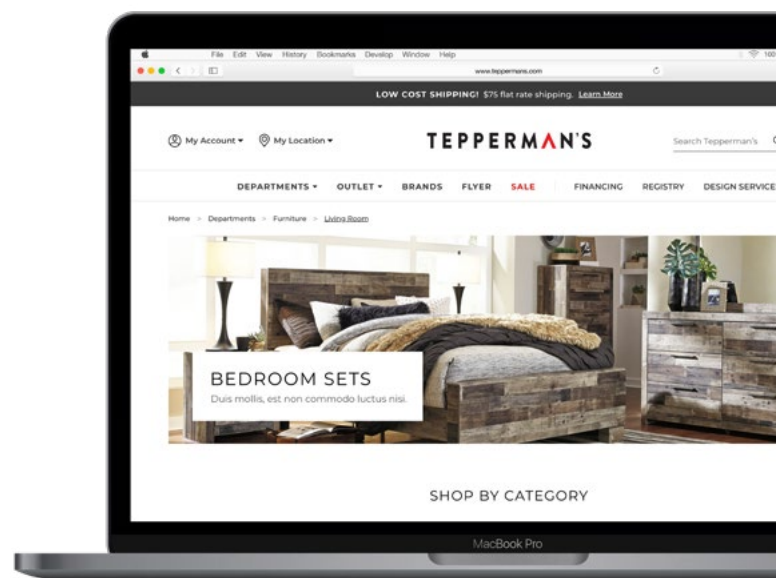


Hilberg & Berk

When Hilberg & Berk was looking to refresh their eCommerce experience, they chose to work with Northern to bring their brand's brilliance to life. Harnessing the features of Shopify Plus, they were able to expand their eCommerce experience and offer a flawless shopping journey for their customers. The team at Northern added greater eCommerce functionality with valuable integrations for customer reviews, enterprise resource planning, and personalized search solutions. Northern delivered the brand's signature in-store experience to the digital space and helped Hilberg & Berk empower women everywhere.

Tepperman's

Tepperman's partnered with Northern to launch a responsive digital storefront for their family of customers and to enhance their eCommerce experience. Northern maximized its expertise with Magento 2 to provide an exceptional online customer experience with increased accessibility to Tepperman's services and products. Implementing a conversion-focused strategy, timely execution, and keeping the client's core values in focus, Northern delivered a robust eCommerce solution. Tepperman's online shopping experience was elevated with fluid inventory and pricing, credit application integrations, and customizable product category templates.



The Wine Shop

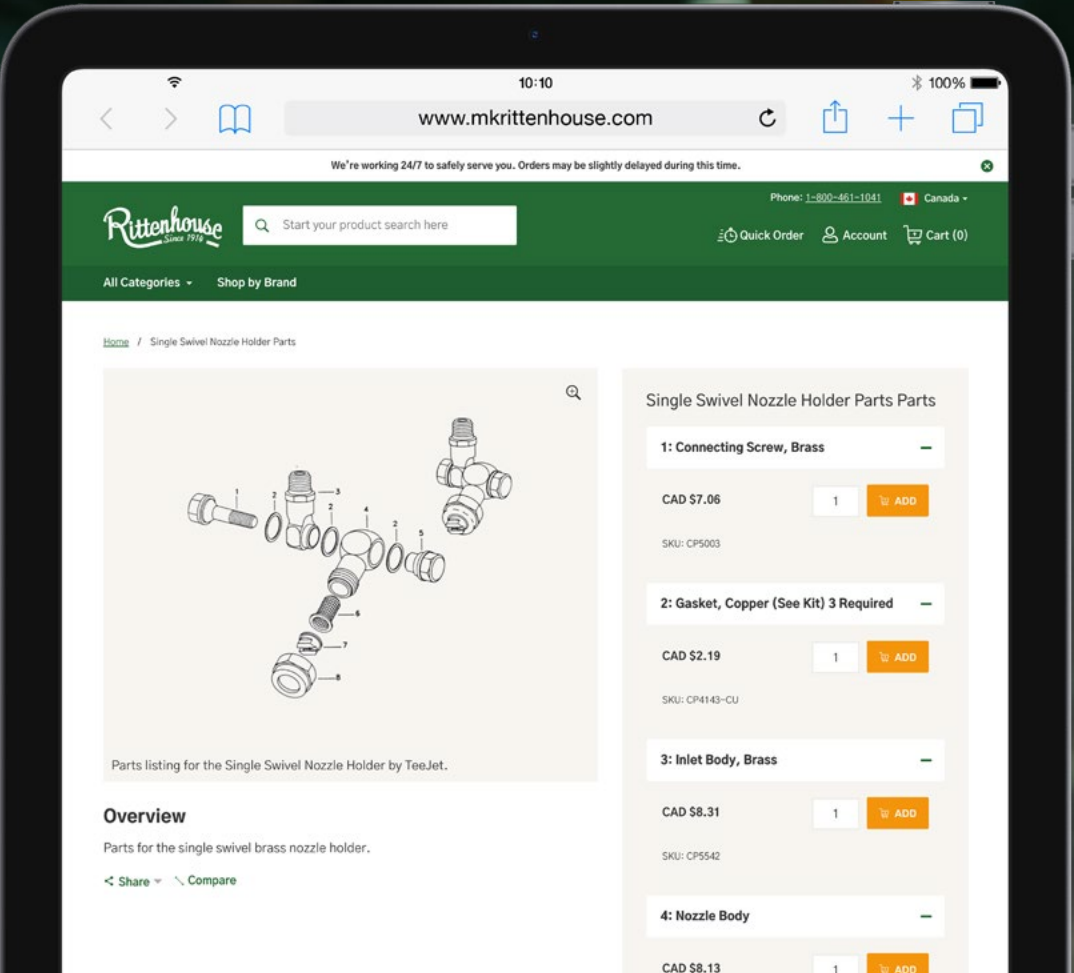
In the spring of 2020, Andrew Peller partnered with Northern Commerce to launch a quick-to-market Magento 2 storefront to meet the surging demand for eCommerce. Following the sudden shift in consumer behaviour, making a switch to focus on eCommerce was critical to continuing Andrew Peller's retail operations following the temporary closure of their brick and mortar locations. Northern orchestrated a complete Magento 2 build in just 30 days. The remarkable 30-day execution was built on a solid foundation of ready-made features and functionality to create a seamless online shopping experience for Andrew Peller customers.



M.K. Rittenhouse

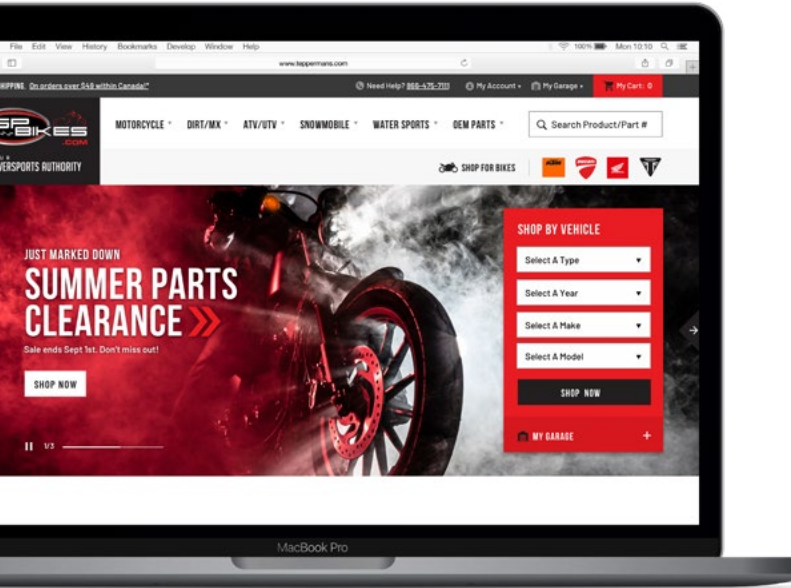
M.K. Rittenhouse has been a leader in the Green Industry for over 100 years—delivering the highest quality equipment, parts, and accessories coupled with the most comprehensive customer service. In order to serve their online customers, M.K. Rittenhouse partnered with Northern to launch a new Canadian and American eCommerce website through Magento. The new website features

B2B functionality, blogs, and Parts Diagrams. In addition, Northern implemented ShipperHQ, an eCommerce solution that provides M.K. Rittenhouse with the ability to offer a wide range of shipping rates and methods to their customers across Canada and the U.S. As a result, M.K. Rittenhouse has achieved remarkable growth, nearly doubling their year-over-year sales.



GP Bikes

As a leading powersports retailer, GP Bikes needed a powerful eCommerce platform to handle their complex product catalogue. Our Magento team implemented Magento 2 with custom integrations to seamlessly connect the retailer’s storefront with their dealer management system. The build resulted in a unified shopping experience by allowing customers to explore different brands all from one central digital storefront.

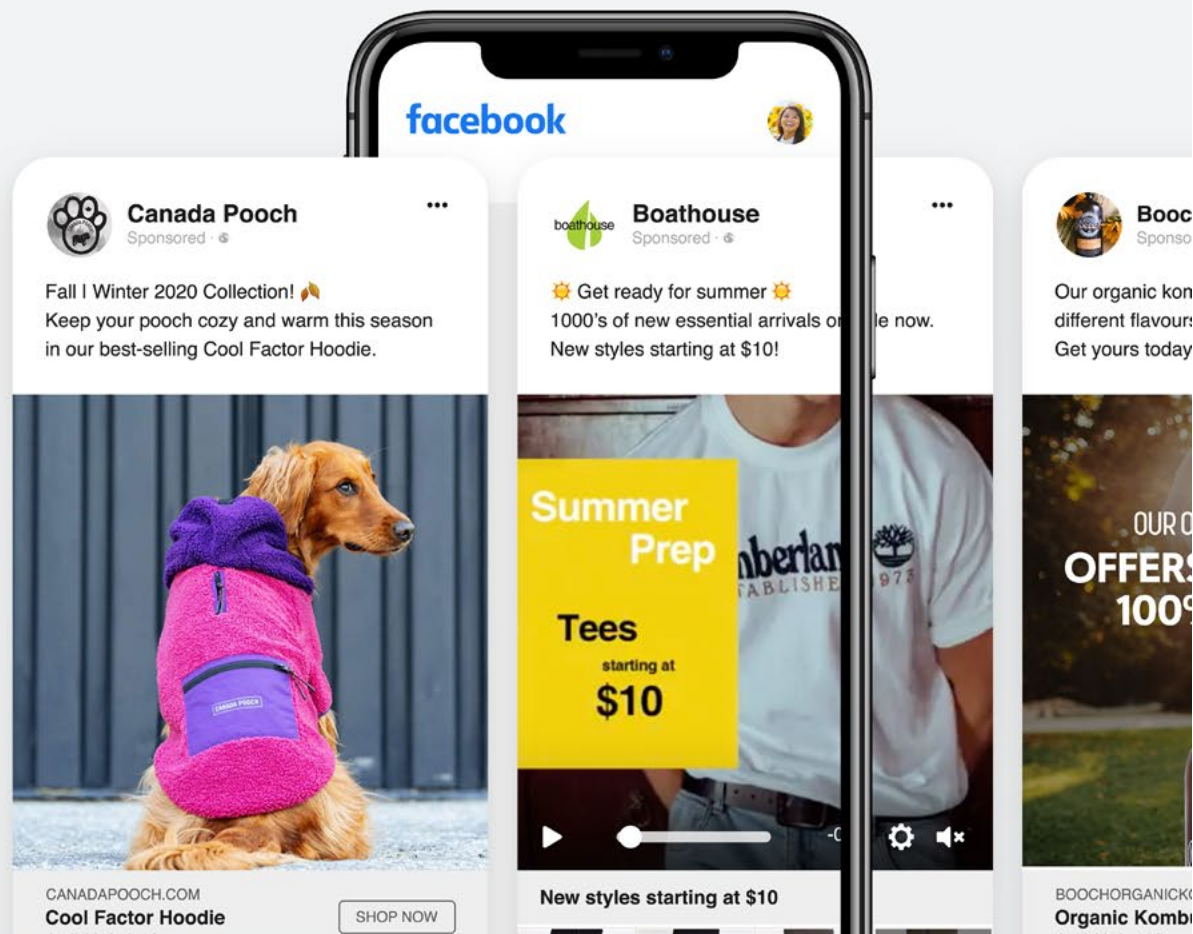
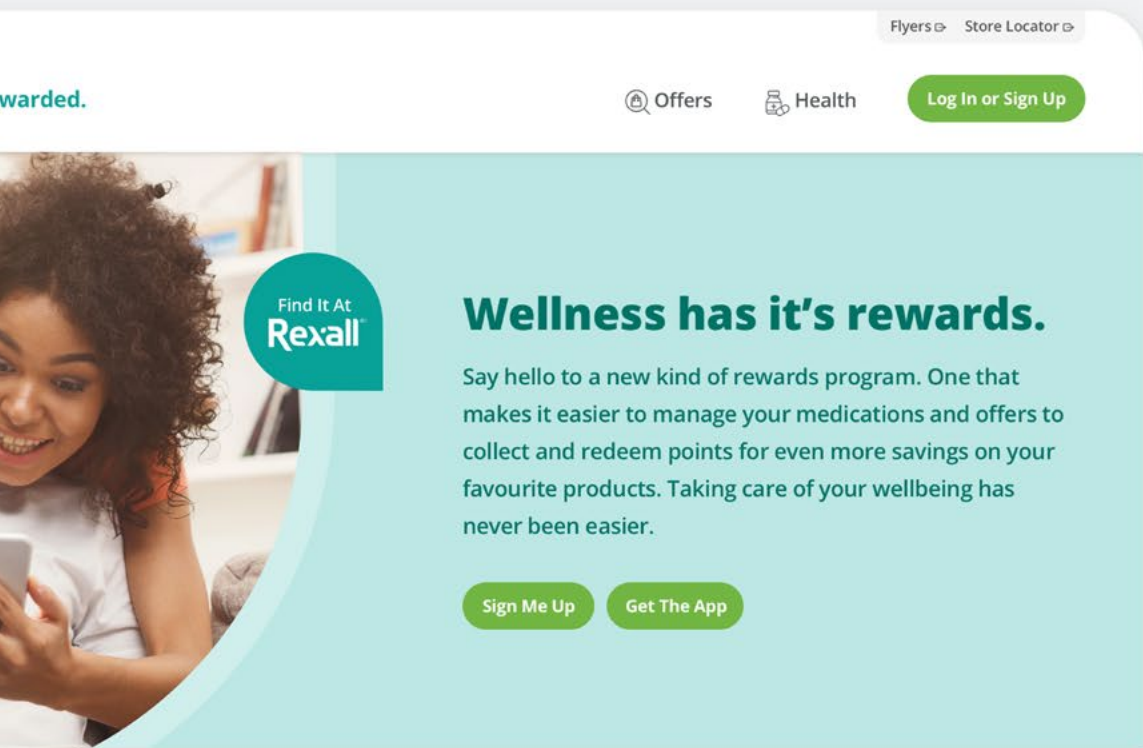
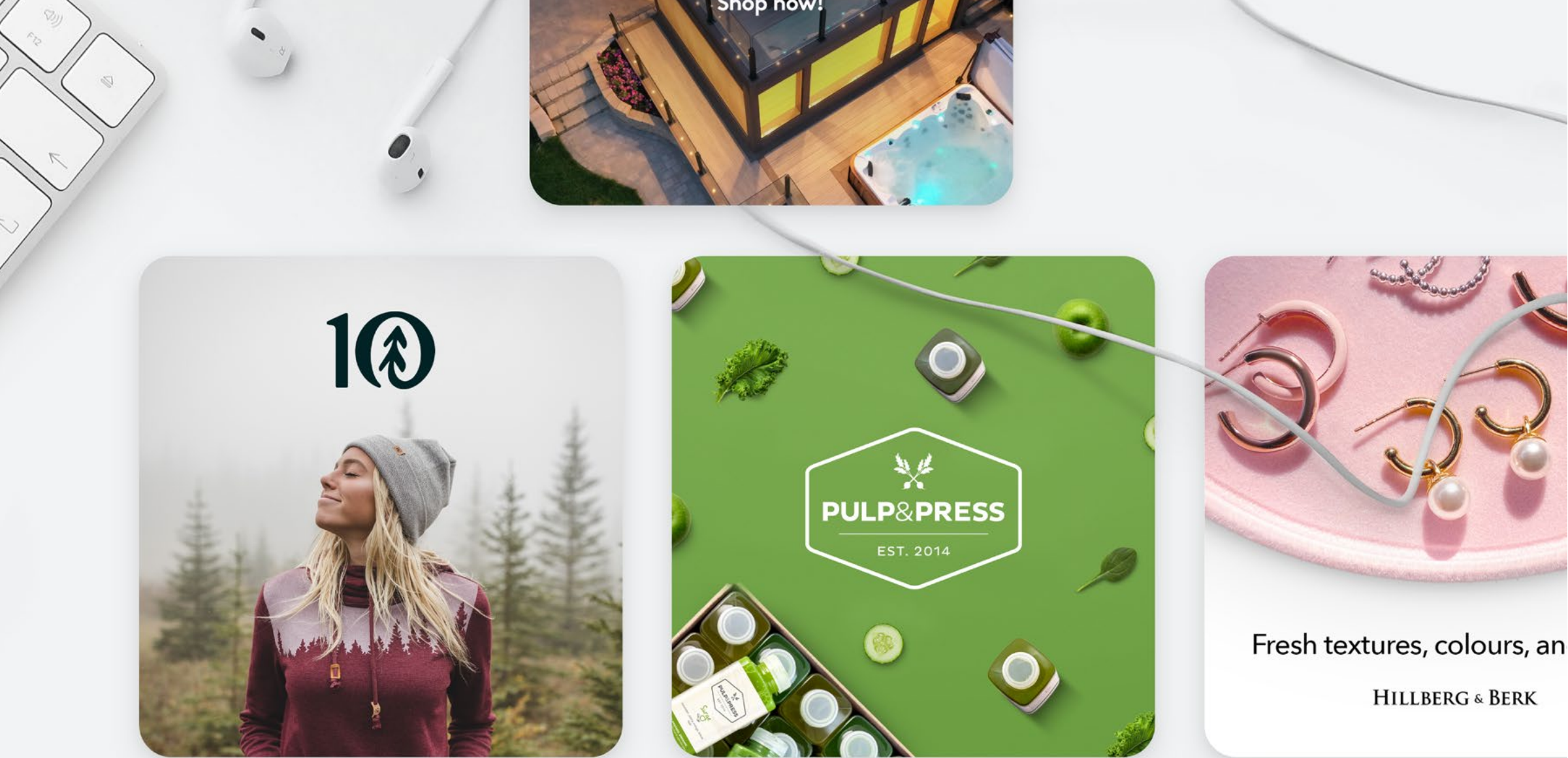


Mr. Case

For over three decades, Mr. Case has offered the convenience of delivering grocery products and office supplies to thousands of homes and businesses in the Greater Toronto Area. The Mr. Case and Mr. Case Food Service websites offer a selection of over 30,000 products, while committing to next day delivery.

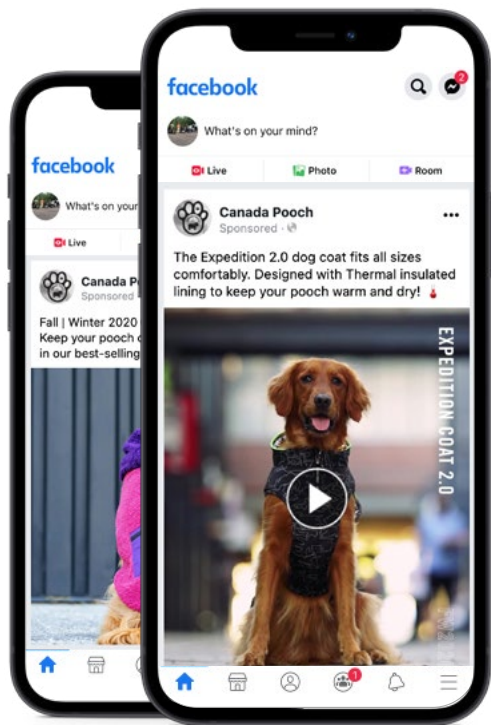
To achieve this commitment, Northern implemented Magento 2 to create a seamless online shopping experience. Northern leveraged a multi-theme implementation strategy to allow the merchant to easily manage both domains and websites on a single installation.





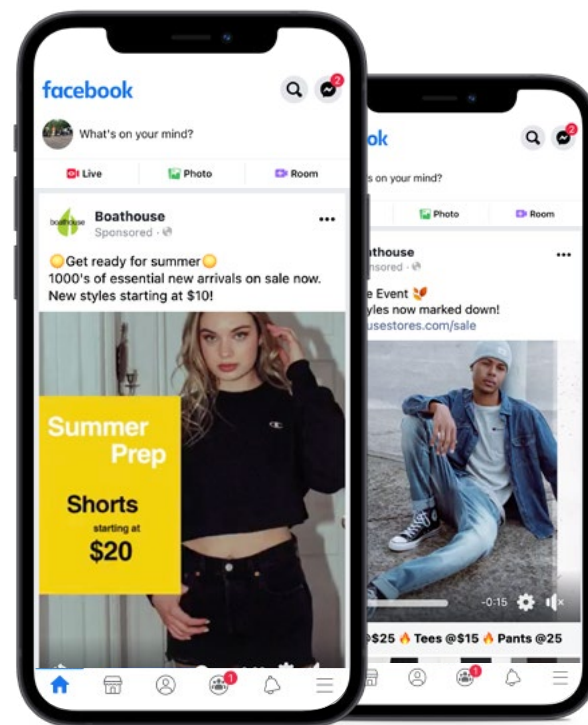
Customer Engagement

In an increasingly competitive market, commerce-led engagement strategies meet consumers where they are, and draw them in through enticing creative. Northern worked with a variety of brands on strategies and campaigns to attract new customers and increase customer retention. Northern leveraged combinations of paid media, marketing automation, and loyalty initiatives to put our clients top-of-mind for key audiences.



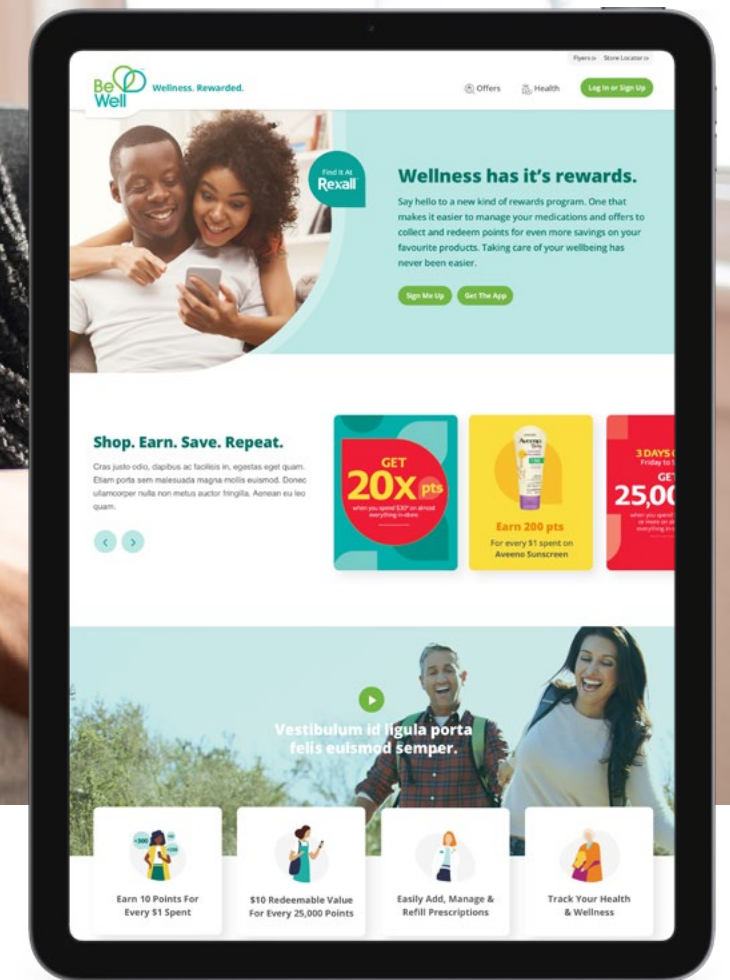
Canada Pooch

Northern partnered with Canada Pooch to reach new customers and grow the brand through automatic ad placements on Facebook. Through a comprehensive strategy, Northern effectively helped Canada Pooch realize their goals - the ad placements contributed to an increase in store revenue coupled with a lower cost per sale.



Boathouse

As consumer behaviour predominantly shifted online in 2020, Boathouse had to pivot rapidly in order to offset declines from brick & mortar store closures. Identifying an opportunity to scale an already profitable paid media strategy, Northern worked closely with their partners at Google to develop a roadmap that would allow Boathouse to not only meet, but exceed company-wide revenue targets by better leveraging digital.



Rexall – Be Well

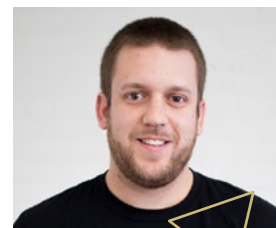
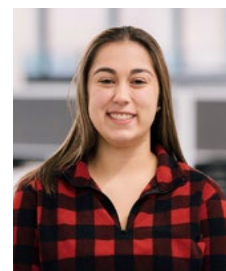
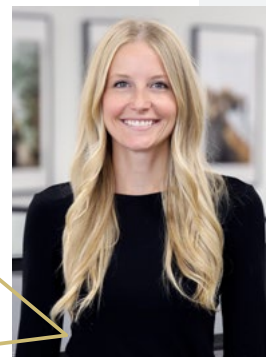
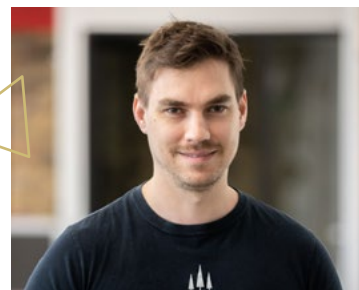
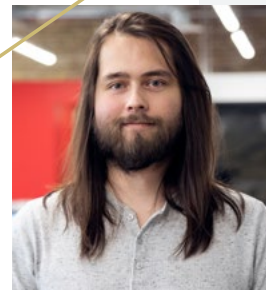
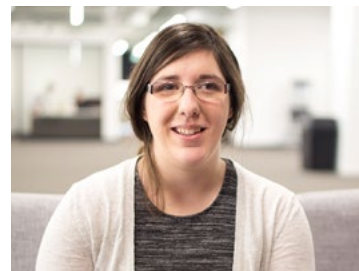
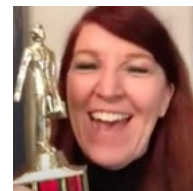
Rexall partnered with Northern to launch and promote the company's new wellness and rewards program, Be Well. After identifying that traditional loyalty programs were not meeting the needs of Canadian Consumers, Rexall took a digitally innovative approach which integrated health tracking, prescription refills, rewards, and virtual consultations. Northern implemented

an all-encompassing marketing strategy using multiple channels to support the launch and adoption of the new loyalty program. The strategy included a new dedicated website and app, with a targeted acquisition strategy via Google and Apple advertising campaigns, and automated email journeys.



CULTURE

“Together apart” has been our mantra of 2020. The sudden necessity of remote work made us get creative about how we connect with our team and our community. Zoom fatigue aside—a variety of virtual events continually remind us that we are part of a team, not just a company.



2020 Achievement Awards

Northern celebrated our talented team and their remarkable accomplishments at Northern's annual Achievement Awards. Although virtual, the Northern team had a lot of fun celebrating project launches, new faces, awards and achievements. The cast of The Office even attended through virtual cameos.



Virtual Events

This year may have required us to go virtual, but it certainly didn't stop our team from having fun! Virtual lunches, Friday Zoom happy hours, remote yoga and wellness breaks, a virtual pumpkin carving contest, gingerbread house and desk decorating contests, and even a virtual holiday party brought us all together.



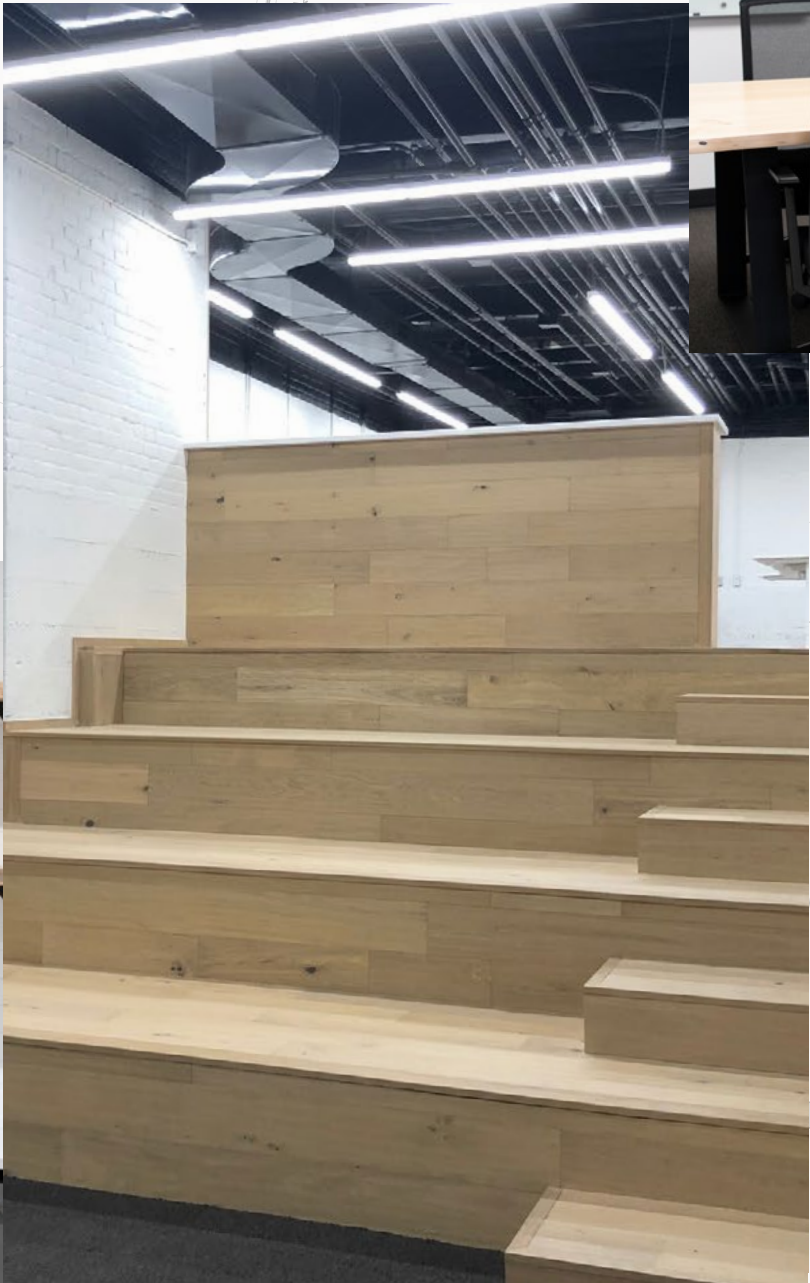
Growing Team

In addition to bringing on more than 70 new employees from Digital Echidna, we also hired nearly 40 new team members in 2020. We are proud to formally welcome a host of new employees, interns and co-ops as we continue to grow in 2021.



New Construction

With so many new faces on our roster, combined with requirements for social distancing, Northern has been working on renovations again. To support the expansion of the Northern team, we have expanded to a new floor that will house an auditorium-style educational space for presentations and office functions, additional office spaces, a yoga and wellness area and a kitchen.



N CARES

Northern stayed connected with our local community with a commitment of over \$200,000 towards local charitable organizations last year. Through our Northern Cares (NCares) corporate social responsibility initiative, we supported local non-profits through a variety of donations, sponsorships and volunteer work.



\$200K+
donated to charities in 2020

Habitat for Humanity

In 2020, Northern announced its newest Northern Cares charitable partnership with Habitat for Humanity Heartland Ontario. The partnership included a donation of \$150,000 worth of digital services to support the growth of Habitat for Humanity in their mission to empower families through affordable homeownership.

London Community Gift Drive

Over the holiday season, Northern partnered with local hip-hop artist Left Lane, and Roots, to raise over \$11,000 in support of over 100 local families in need. All funds raised were put towards holiday gifts for the children of local families who reside in London & Middlesex Community Housing.



Habitat for Humanity



Community Living
London



London Affordable
Housing Foundation



Humane Society
London & Middlesex



Forest City
Film Festival



BusinessCares
Food Drive



St. Joseph's Coming
Together Campaign

Education Outreach

Northern has continued its commitment to helping educate students in our community by partnering with post-secondary schools. This year we partnered with Fanshawe College to pioneer two new courses for students in Fanshawe’s Interactive Media Design & Production program, preparing students for a career in the technology industry. Northern also launched and co-funded the Northern Digital Marketing Challenge, an experiential learning competition that provides students with hands-on experience supporting marketing efforts for local businesses affected by the pandemic.



Drupal Course

The Fanshawe College Drupal web development course provided foundational Drupal training for students in Fanshawe’s two-year Interactive Media Design and Production program, and the one-year Advanced Interactive Media Specialist program. Taught by Drupal Grandmasters and Certified Drupal Developers, students gained an introduction to the Drupal 8 content management system, including site building in Drupal 8, layouts, theming, and module development.

Shopify Course

In this course taught by Northern’s front-end developers, students learned the fundamentals of building high-performing eCommerce websites using Shopify’s all-in-one commerce platform as well as the career-specific software skills. The course was designed to empower students with the knowledge and experience necessary for a career in eCommerce web development and get a jumpstart towards Shopify’s Theme Development Certification. From strategy through to implementation and management, students learned what it takes to create immersive, high-performing commerce websites.

Digital Marketing Challenge

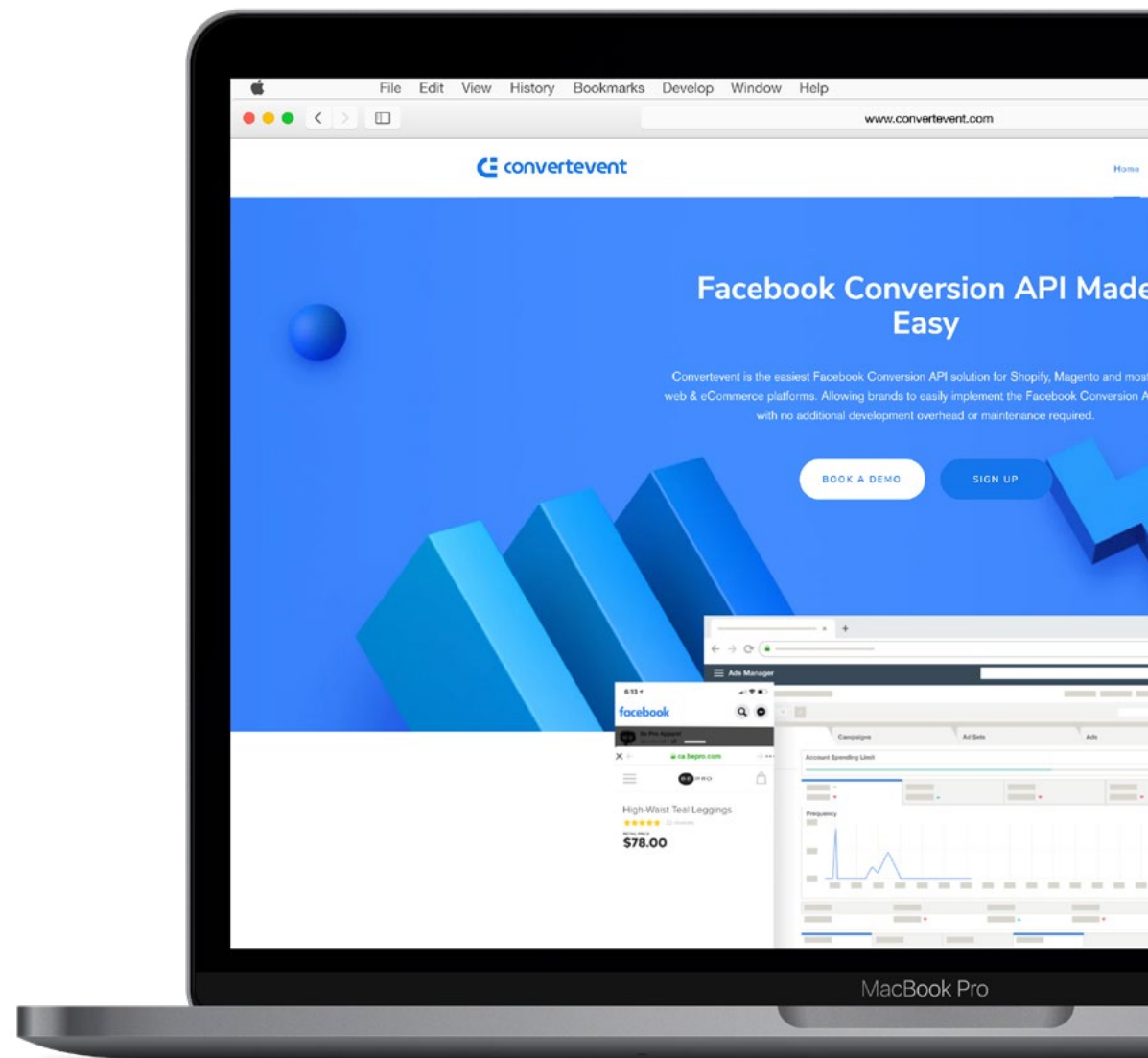
The Northern Digital Marketing Challenge is a co-funded program by Fanshawe’s Centre for Research and Innovation and Northern Commerce. The challenge tasked teams of students to build, execute, and manage live marketing campaigns using Google and Facebook for 14 local businesses over a two-month period. At the end of the two-month challenge, teams presented their campaigns and results to a panel of judges from Northern Commerce, where a grand prize winner was selected. Students were given the opportunity to learn directly from the team at Northern Commerce.





INNOVATION

Northern is a team of innovators and creative thinkers. We are explorers by nature, continually pursuing excellence for ourselves and our clients. Our core values act as our compass—guiding our path and defining what it means to be a true Northerner. We regularly explore new ideas as we push the boundaries of what is possible and constantly challenge the status quo.



Convertevent

In 2020, Northern announced the launch of Convertevent—the leading Facebook Conversion API solution. Convertevent allows brands to easily implement the Facebook Conversion API Pixel with no additional development overhead or maintenance required. While browsers continue to block tracked events sent to Facebook, Convertevent leverages a website’s server to send data to Facebook through the Conversion API. Convertevent helps to increase Facebook ad performance, grow clients’ retargeting audience

pools, optimize campaigns to increase event visibility, and collect deeper data to create more successful campaigns.

Our clients have seen increases in the number of purchases tracked, revenue from new customers, and audience growth for retargeting lists. Convertevent seamlessly integrates with top eCommerce platforms, including: Magento, Shopify, Salesforce Commerce Cloud, and BigCommerce.



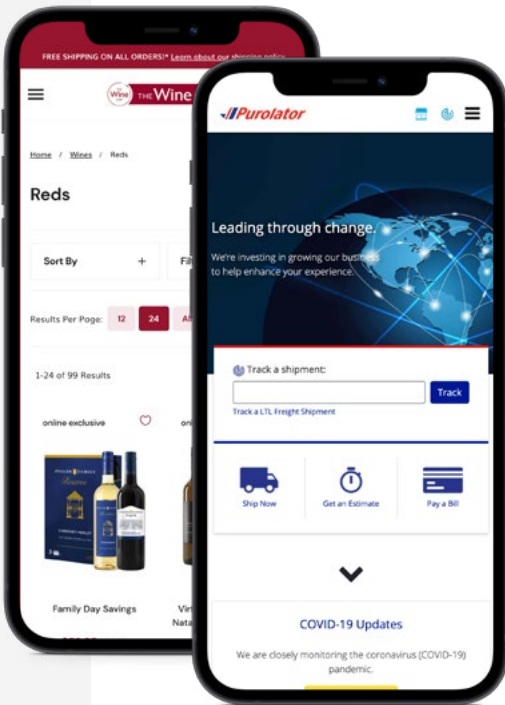
Express Solutions

With the onset of the pandemic, companies needed a quick go-to-market solution that would allow them to transition into or rapidly scale up their online commerce. Northern developed a custom framework for Magento 2 to implement quality, complex ecommerce solutions in only 30 days—rather than the traditional six month or more commitment for a fully custom solution.

We employed a similar solution for multiple Drupal CMS projects using an established base solution called Boilerplate, built by the Northern team as a template and then customized to meet each client’s needs. Add-on configurations called “scaffolds” were developed and standardized to allow developers to quickly develop other frequently requested site components like paragraphs setup, layout builder set, alerts, or geolocation based views. EchidNET, an intranet platform built by the Northern team, also used a base version that could be quickly tailored for various organizations—in particular, helping several health care organizations launch secure places for their teams to communicate online during the pandemic.

KEY FEATURES OF EXPRESS SOLUTIONS

- Custom Configurations
- Improved User Experience
- Robust SEO Modules
- Store Locator & Geolocation Views
- Site Banner Managers
- Testing, Training & Launch



Be part of our 2021 story.

At Northern, we elevate the ways you build your brand and use our industry-leading expertise to compose transformative digital experiences.

Want to achieve incredible results? Let's talk.

[**northern.co/contact**](https://northern.co/contact)

An aerial photograph of a dense forest of evergreen trees, likely spruce or fir, showing a variety of green shades from deep forest green to lighter, yellowish-green at the tips of the trees. The canopy is thick and textured.

NORTHERN

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