



A first glimpse at HBC's new marketing approach arrives with the 'Accessorize' campaign by Leo Burnett. John st.'s first campaign will start in spring.

RETAIL

## HBC taps independent ad shop for edgy Bay campaign

Hudson's Bay Co. is developing an edgy ad campaign for the Bay in an effort to reverse the department store's reputation as a tired "mom" brand.

The historic company this week bypassed its roster of corporate ad agencies to appoint independent Toronto ad shop **john st.** as the Bay's agency of record.

Patrick Dickinson, general manager of marketing at HBC, said that while the Bay has fantastic brand awareness across the country, most Canadians think there's nothing new or exciting about the brand.

"We need to . . . break out off the box of [being seen as] your mom's store — nothing new, nothing different — and try to really reinvent the model of what a department

store can be . . ." he said.

"We do want to be edgy. We are going to push the envelope."

Mr. Dickinson said that instead of one long-running campaign, each season will have its own distinct feel to keep the Bay brand fresh and top of mind. Some of those seasonal campaigns will be less conventional than others, he said.

He declined to provide more details of the Bay's new marketing platform, but did say HBC's 336-year legacy won't be part of the mix.

"Everyone knows the Bay from Grade 4 social studies, but no matter how much you play up that part of it, I don't think it necessarily gets people in the door," he said.

"Everybody loves us, but we need more people to shop us, and shop-

ping is about the emotion of what you're going to find, the excitement of the styles and fashions and quality of goods that you want to buy."

John st. — whose corporate motto is "be unignorable" — was founded in 2001 by a group of ad executives after they departed former agency Ammirati Puris. Some of them worked on the Sears Canada account at Ammirati and developed the much-talked about "Aubergine" ad in an attempt to revitalize the Eatons brand.

Arthur Fleischmann, president of john st., said the agency won the account because it understands the importance of brand aesthetic and because of its insights into the female consumer.

HBC has traditionally relied on

multinational agencies for its advertising. But Mr. Dickinson said it gave itself permission to make what is perceived to be the riskier choice because of the unconventional approach it has planned for the Bay brand.

Other agencies in HBC's roster include Leo Burnett, which handles the Zellers brand, and Draft FCB, which is responsible for Olympic advertising and the HBC brand.

The first john st. campaign will start in late spring, but consumers will get their first glimpse at HBC's new approach to marketing in a campaign that launches next week based on the theme "accessorize."

The advertising work for that campaign was done by Leo Burnett on a project basis. *Keith McArthur*