SOCIAL HOUR
Iconic events with Gizem Aksay

TOUR TIME, Haida Style

TECH-SMART TOURIST
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GUSTAVSON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND GILL GRADUATE SCHOOL MAGAZINE   SPRING/SUMMER 2017

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On the cover: Gizem Aksay, photo: Lindsey Donovan Photography.
This page: Top right: Gizem Aksay, photo: Lindsey Donovan Photography.
Top left: Austin Studer, photo: Courtesy of Austin Studer.
Bottom: Photo: Mike Crane, courtesy of Tourism Whistler
POISED ON THE EDGE of another summer season, this issue of Business Class takes stock of how Gustavson crosses boundaries and how our community interacts with the world of tourism, hospitality and travel.

Travel, and the personal and professional growth that comes from international learning, has always been a central element of Gustavson’s ideology and curriculum. From our BComs studying abroad (78.7% per cent will spend a semester on exchange in 2017) to our MBA’s International Applied Projects, and the world-travellers enrolled in our Master of Global Business program, international travel, study and perspective are highly valued and tightly integrated into all our programs.

Indeed, it is one of the core principles that sets our business school apart from others.

At the same time, we recognize that travel has high impact on the environment and on local communities and our choices as travellers may have far-reaching consequences. The decisions we make reflect the extent to which we trust others to behave responsibly and to deliver on their promises.

In travel, trust is paramount, perhaps more so than in other industries. At the industry’s very core is the travellers’ willingness to get out of their comfort zones and throw caution to the wind; without trusting service providers, they would never leave the controlled environment of their homes (or home universities).

And as travel is essential to our identity at Gustavson, so, too, is trust. Each year, we publish the Gustavson Brand Trust Index, a ranking of leading Canadian and global brands. We survey more than 6,500 people and measure their trust in 294 well-known brands in 26 categories. Gustavson crunched the numbers. Drumroll, please: the 2017 Gustavson Brand Trust Index results are in.

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www.uvic.ca/gustavson/brandtrust/
Tread Lightly

GUSTAVSON TAPPED the Centre for Social and Sustainable Innovation (CSSI) for a few simple ways that conscientious travellers can minimize their impact on the environment.

- **Lifetime** floatable water bottles can help you efficiently treat your own water wherever your journey takes you. They're lightweight and easy to get through security checks.

- **Reusable containers** are the sweetest new old thing. You can wrap half a muffin in one and stash it in a backpack for later. They make great washcloths for campers or hostellers: they dry quickly, and even when they’re damp they don’t weigh much. They’re also handy to clean or bandage minor road rash. They fold up small, dry fast and come in colours both pretty and manly.

- **Dish towels aren’t just for the kitchen any more.** Repurpose a couple and they’re ideal for travel snacks and take-out. You can wrap half a muffin in one and stash it in a backpack for later. They make great washcloths for campers or hostellers: they dry quickly, and even when they’re damp they don’t weigh much. They’re also handy to clean or bandage minor road rash. They fold up small, dry fast and come in colours both pretty and manly.

- **Bandanas** are the sweetest new old thing. They’re also handy to clean or bandage minor road rash. They fold up small, dry fast and come in colours both pretty and manly.

- **A collapsible water container.** This baby is easy to get through security checks while it’s empty. Partner this with a high-efficiency ultraviolet water treatment system, and you can safely and cost-efficiently treat your own water wherever your journey takes you.

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**Gram It**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

The BC Parks system has over 1,000 parks and protected areas. We’ve featured five paths on p. 15 to help you get inspired to discover a new favourite view. Share your photos on Instagram and tag @gustavson or post them on Instagram and tag gustavson on your adventures!

**Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient 2017**

**THIS YEAR, GUSTAVSON is pleased to name** Lenora Lee, BCom ‘02, as the recipient of our 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award. Lee is a Partner with KPMG’s assurance practice in Victoria. Being named partner in 2011—the first female to be promoted to partner in Victoria’s office—was just the latest in a string of achievements for this talented, young professional. These achievements range from her 2009 Institute of Chartered Accountants Early Achievement Award for accomplishments in career, profession and community, to her career as a trusted business advisor at KPMG. Lee is an active member of the Victoria Chinese Commerce Association and was also one of the founders of the School of Business Alumni Chapter in Victoria.

Lee is often on campus recruiting for new CPA articling students, volunteering as a mentor to BCom and MBA students, and teaching as a sessional instructor. Congratulations to Lee on this well-deserved honour. Her commitment to her profession, her clients, the business community and the university is second to none and we’re proud to recognize her efforts in business and volunteering.
Get stoked with Whistler

Whistler is an easy sell to any ski buff, snowboarder, mountain biker or gondola lover. Nestled close to Vancouver, the picturesque tourist town practically sells itself, but the Whistler Chamber of Commerce and its members aren’t content to rely on its beautiful vistas alone. No, when you come for a visit, they want to offer you the ultimate customer experience: impeccable, personalized service no matter where on the mountain you visit. You can try to shake it, but exceptional service will follow you wherever you go. Locals have coined it The Whistler Experience, and it’s proving to be a game changer for the town that tourism built.

Launched in 2013, The Whistler Experience is the brainchild of the Whistler Chamber of Commerce. Looking for a solution to spotty service levels throughout the resort town, and to bolster employee retention, the organization determined that town-wide service excellence training would provide a long-term solution to the struggles its members were facing. The Chamber partnered with Gustavson—known for expertise in service management—to take on the challenge of teaching customer service excellence to the entire town. Visit a restaurant, hit the slopes, or pick up a souvenir—the Whistler Experience service framework—helping to standardize service practices across the resort, in line with the master plan. The result? Repeat visits and happy customers, which in turn makes for successful businesses. But The Whistler Experience also offers benefits for resort owners and employees that are more immediately fun than balanced books.

Whistler is a top global tourism destination year-round, in part because of its world-class service. If you want to see people loving their day jobs, the annual Instagram contest highlighting the happiest people and businesses in Whistler gives you a front row seat to the excitement that The Whistler Experience generates amongst its ranks. And stoking that excitement is lead instructor Dr. Mark Colgate. With his trademark rapid-fire, quick-witted delivery, Colgate takes participants through his 3Rs of Service Excellence: Be Reliable, Be Responsive and Build Relationships. Colgate’s 3Rs of Service Excellence draw from human behaviour research and service management best practices. “Our goal is to provide participants with a framework and a toolkit they can immediately implement in their customer interactions,” says Colgate. “Part of the power of The Whistler Experience is that you can see results exponentially since its inception. The original 140-person pilot group has expanded to over 16,000 trainees with the program under their belts. This number is the equivalent of approximately 50 per cent of the total annual workforce in Whistler. Most businesses have adopted The Whistler Experience service framework—helping to standardize service practices across the resort, in line with the master plan. The result? Repeat visits and happy customers, which in turn makes for successful businesses. But The Whistler Experience also offers benefits for resort owners and employees that are more immediately fun than balanced books.

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And the Whistler community echoes that sentiment. Whistler Councillor and private ski instructor André Janyk says of her experience in the program, “The Whistler Experience training has provided me with increased knowledge of guest services. I always knew that building a relationship was important, but to know that reliability and responsiveness are just as important to complete the experience for the guest has truly added more thoughtfulness to my relationships with my guests.”

The Whistler Chamber of Commerce couldn’t have hoped for more. “When we started the program we saw it as an opportunity to elevate the customer experience throughout the resort,” says Chamber CEO Melissa Pace. “But it’s proved to be a transformational change for our town. Implementing The Whistler Experience service model has had a positive economic impact for Whistler, both in terms of employee satisfaction and retention, and in positive guest experiences.”

Yes, there’s definitely something special happening in Whistler, and it’s getting noticed beyond the town’s borders as well. Earlier this year, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) recognized Gustavson and The Whistler Experience as one of 35 Innovations That Inspire for 2017. The international recognition honours innovation in business education delivery. The Whistler Experience was selected from a total of 315 submissions across 33 countries.

What started as a business initiative turned into a community movement, with an entire town embracing a new way of delivering customer service, and is now growing in prestige as the world begins to take notice of the magic they’ve created in their mountain resort. And who wouldn’t be stoked about that?
Small but mighty

MBA teams top case competitions

by Siv Buchmuller

The Sarbdl S. Gill Graduate School MBA is designed around small class sizes and a multidisciplinary, integrative approach to learning. While the strength of the program is clearly demonstrated through the careers alumni go on to have, the young program has only recently claimed its proper place in another important success index: case competitions. In the few short years since our pioneering case competitors have begun to flex their business strategy muscles against the brightest minds in Canada and abroad, they have established the program as a powerhouse, already achieving extraordinary success.

In earning these accolades, they also have demonstrated how the intentionally small size of the MBA cohort, which could be a disadvantage in case competitions, can in fact give them the advantage of familiarity as they work together to solve some of the world’s thorniest business problems. Case competitions are time-limited challenges where teams of students develop and present strategies to solve a real-life business problem. Each team creates a proposed solution, which they then present. Despite their size, the UVic MBA is often the smallest. Yet Ozbilim says that the intentionally small class size, instead of being a handicap, actually boosts the teams’ performance. She attributes their success in large part to the significant amount of teamwork woven throughout the MBA program, as a powerhouse, already achieving extraordinary success.

Winning the international contest was a major accomplishment, as top business schools from around the world take part. “It was seeing this team’s success—before even enrolling in the MBA program—that inspired Bhupinder Dulku, MBA ‘17, to form a team of his own the following year. Lightning rarely strikes twice, especially in such a competitive arena, but UVic’s team managed to win the same competition in 2016, with a roster that included Dulku, Mukesh Dhatwalia, Dorothy Pan and Laurent Sayville—again guided by Murphy.”

The enthusiasm has rubbed off on the next crop of MBAs, who have actively participated in case competitions since beginning the program in August 2016. Most recently, they’ve found success at the National MBA Games (taking home the prize for best overall academic performance) and at Ivey Business School’s 2015 Business for a Better World Case Competition Champions.

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“Case competitions brought it all together for me,” says Laidlaw. “The classroom learning, the presentation skills, the teamwork that’s emphasized throughout the program—and put it in a context immediately relevant to real-world business. I hope future MBA students likewise see the value in participating and have just as transformative an experience as I did.”

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From her station behind the DJ deck onstage, Gizem Aksay, MBA ‘15, has an electrifying view of the undulating crowd. It’s a sea of white, the air pulses with the bass from the music she’s playing. Thousands of guests from both near and far have donned their most elegant whites and gathered at a top-secret location to be part of this unforgettable, invitation-only event, which Aksay and her team have been working on for months. It’s the after-party crescendo of another successful Dîner en Blanc, Canada’s largest and most anticipated annual public picnic, and for Aksay, it’s a peak moment: the culmination of months of work promoting the event and the chance to indulge her favourite pastime as a DJ.

Occasional DJ and full-time marketing professional, Aksay is digital communications director for The Social Concierge, an event branding and marketing agency that specializes in curating a signature portfolio of designer events including the iconic Dîner en Blanc in Vancouver. First held in Paris in 1988, the concept of the event is that a secret location is divulged to a select group of people, who dress all in white and flash-gather in a public area to create a chic dining space where they enjoy good food, wine and company—and an after-party. The tradition has blossomed in cities all around the world and is a mainstay of the social scene in Vancouver and Victoria. To give a sense of the scope of the logistics involved in this undertaking, Vancouver’s 2016 event saw nearly 6,000 diners. “The events industry can be extremely stressful,” says Aksay. “It just takes one thing to go wrong and then all your hard work comes undone. So many details, so many possibilities. But when it comes together, and you see people connecting and having fun, well, there’s something very special about creating an unforgettable experience.”

For Aksay, her role at the Vancouver-based company, with its emphasis on designer events, is a true departure from her life pre-MBA. Born and raised in Istanbul, Turkey, Aksay’s previous roles were product focused, having worked as an IT and communications specialist from her station behind the DJ deck onstage, Gizem Aksay, MBA ’15, has an electrifying view of the undulating crowd. It’s a sea of white; the air pulses with the bass from the music she’s playing. Thousands of guests from both near and far have donned their most elegant whites and gathered at a top-secret location to be part of this unforgettable, invitation-only event, which Aksay and her team have been working on for months. It’s the after-party crescendo of another successful Dîner en Blanc, Canada’s largest and most anticipated annual public picnic, and for Aksay, it’s a peak moment: the culmination of months of work promoting the event and the chance to indulge her favourite pastime as a DJ.

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Gizem Aksay says it is thanks to her experience at the Sardul S. Gill Graduate School and the exposure it gave her to fellow students, who represented different ages, backgrounds and walks of life, that her eyes were opened to a service industry focused on people. “At Gustavson, for the first time in my life I was creating projects with such a diverse group. It made me appreciate and understand the differences and taught me how to deal with, and take the lead in, a variety of environments. It gives you a very holistic approach, and with Gustavson’s consulting project placements in China, India and Brazil it expands your horizons and opens you up to a bigger picture,” she adds.

It was during her final year that several inspiring events occurred for Aksay: her MBA focus dialled in on service management and she came across a placement at The Social Concierge on the school’s website. “I was fascinated by what they were doing, how they brought together their clients like Nike, Aksay’s MBA skills have been extremely useful. “It was just such a natural transition. It was a role where I could take all the soft skills I had developed during my MBA, such as decision-making under pressure, leadership and teamwork, and combine them with my digital marketing experience and my passion for making people happy.”

Aksay leads a small team that includes a social media producer and digital platforms specialist, and at times, her MBA prowess has come in useful to defuse a situation. “We are working with a lot of tight deadlines, dealing with late nights and various campaigns and partners for such different events. It can become a very stressed environment, so being able to make fast decisions, plan and manage projects and people is an essential part of my job. I can honestly say my MBA experience helped me to deal with these situations.”

So how does Aksay relax? Aside from travelling to warm places and dining out in her favourite restaurants with her favourite people, music is her passion. When she’s not working at The Social Concierge, you will find her behind the decks mixing house tunes. “I used to DJ in Istanbul and I love house and deep house music, although hip hop and dance are more popular in Vancouver. This job offers me many things, including the chance to DJ at some of the events,” she says. “If I had to choose one of the events, it would be DJing at some of the events.”

Aksay’s passion for facilitating that remarkable experience is what makes her a natural fit for this people-focused industry. “I could take all the soft skills I have, the experience and my passion for helping people, and apply them with my digital marketing experience to make people happy.”

With LG Electronics and Kliksa, “I believe in experiences, those moments that make one’s life prettier. Today my ‘product’ is people, whether that’s locals or tourists, and I love it,” says Aksay.

In 2015, Aksay received a formal offer to join full-time to oversee the growing company’s digital marketing portfolio. With events that include The Deighton Cup at Hastings Racetrack (which attracts around 5,000 equestrian socialites from all over Canada and the U.S.), the networking event Dinner By Design (which brings together internationally-celebrated designers and local talent), the Oktoberfest-inspired Harvest Haus, and more bespoke company events for local companies like lululemon and international clients like Nike, Aksay’s MBA skills have been extremely useful.

“Skagit Valley
(South Coast)

The Skagit Valley was carved by retreating glaciers and is characterized by excellent outdoor recreation opportunities in a natural, wilderness-like setting.

Strathcona Park
(West Coast)

The oldest provincial park in BC. Located centrally on Vancouver Island, Strathcona Park is a rugged mountain wilderness comprising more than 250,000 hectares. Bottle Lake and Forbidden Plateau have visitor-friendly developments. The rest of the park appeals to people seeking wilderness.

Kikomun Creek
(Kootenay/Okanagan)

Located in a dry, sunny area of the province, this park has Indoor Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine forest and grassland habitat. Family-oriented, with paved roads.

Lac La Hache
(Thomson/Cariboo)

Lac La Hache is one of the most popular recreation lakes along Highway 97. This area is rich in tales of fur traders, gold seekers and cattle ranchers.

Liad River Hot Springs
(North)

The second largest hot spring in Canada, Liad River Hot Springs is of national ecological significance and is well known for its natural setting in a lush boreal spruce forest.

Kekuli Bay
(Central)

Located in the Okanagan, Kekuli Bay is the third largest park in BC, after the Okanagan Mountain Park and the MacMillan Provincial Park. It is a popular destination for fishing, hiking and picnicking.

With 150 candles on Canada’s birthday cake this year, one of the hot topics in tourism is the free day-use access to national parks and historic sites offered by Parks Canada in 2017. While this special initiative makes hundreds of incredible national treasures more accessible, Canada’s 150 is also a golden opportunity to rediscover the uniquely magical provincial parks in the BC Parks system—which, don’t forget, are always free to enter for day-use.

Leah Wilcock, MBA ’13, is a recreation and business specialist at BC Parks. “BC has the third largest parks system in North America, after Canada’s National Parks and the United States’ National Parks,” says Wilcock. “With over 1,030 parks and protected areas, there is always somewhere new to explore.”

That’s a lot of mountains to climb, lakes to paddle and trails to hike. Here’s a short list of extraordinary provincial parks within this system that will get you started on experiencing all our beautiful province has to offer.”
“Haida Style Expeditions doesn’t take the museum approach when we’re leading our tours—we’re not reading from a book while we walk through a village site. Authenticity is important in telling the story. We have to tell the story as it’s living today and relate it to our past.”

“One of our favourite sites to visit is Windy Bay. In addition to the historical discussion about the logging protests that took place here, what we want guests to understand is the meaning behind the legacy pole at this site. We talk about raising totems to tell a story and commemorate relationships. We don’t just raise a totem pole for the visual benefit. That’s an important part of the conversation to have at this site, and we get a lot of feedback from people who feel touched to be able to walk through the site and learn about the 900-year-old spruce, the logging, the protests, and the meaning of the legacy pole and longhouse.”

Haida Gwaii, BC—travel to this remote archipelago at the edge of the Pacific and you might find, cutting through the waters just off the rocky coastline, a waterproof-clad James Cowpar at the helm of a Titan 240X Zodiac as he introduces visitors to his island home.

Cowpar, a 2015 graduate of the Haida Owned and Operated chapter of Northwest Aboriginal Canadian Entrepreneurs (NW-ACE) and a member of the Tsaahl Eagle Clan, is co-owner of the cultural adventures and fishing expeditions company Haida Style Expeditions, which he founded with his twin brother Shawn in 2013.

Haida Gwaii is renowned among travellers for its old-growth forests, rugged beaches and UNESCO World Heritage site. What Cowpar’s Haida Style Expeditions provides is an opportunity to learn about these natural wonders as integrated elements of the living Haida culture. Although excursions have long been offered on the islands, they were led by off-island tour operators. Haida Style Expeditions and other local tourism-focused businesses have moved to fill this niche for a more authentic island experience.

“Haida Style Expeditions is the first local company to offer cultural adventure tours,” says Cowpar. “But our goal in sharing our story is always to help other local businesses enter the market. It’s a competitive industry, so that may seem surprising, but we know that without our local partners and community we would not succeed. Learning and reciprocity is at the heart of what we do.”

One way this reciprocity shines through is in Cowpar’s ongoing interaction with the Haida Owned and Operated NW-ACE chapter, an initiative of Tribal Resources Investment Corporation (TRICORP), Haida government and Gustavson. “In continuing to work with the Haida Owned and Operated program and its graduates, Haida Style Expeditions has become an active participant helping to support a network that caters to the interests of local businesses,” he says. “Through teaching entrepreneurship, Haida Owned and Operated has aided the island’s ongoing transition away from a primarily resource-based economy. By diversifying the local economy, Haida Gwaii now has the ability to compete globally and take advantage of the many sustainable opportunities around tourism and education-based industries.”

Haida Style Expeditions is one of a number of burgeoning local businesses that have expanded the tourism industry on Haida Gwaii. Several of these local start-ups are owned by graduates of the Haida Owned and Operated NW-ACE program.

“Haida Owned and Operated graduates and their business concepts focus on the long-term opportunities available to them. This program is providing an opportunity to learn at home and build a business where the results are measurable.”

Entrepreneurs (NW-ACE) and a member of the Tsanshl Eagle Clan, is co-owner of the cultural adventures and fishing expeditions company Haida Style Expeditions, which he founded with his twin brother Shawn in 2013.

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How two Gustavson grads made travel a lifestyle

by Rich Taylor

F or Nicole Wears, BCom ’05, Kean Graham, BCom ’07 and countless other Gustavson students, a backpack and a map of Europe were all it took to spark a lifelong passion for travel.

Yet while both Wears’ and Graham’s globetrotting began in similar circumstances, they have gone on to craft unique lifestyles that satisfy their commitments, career goals and wanderlust in very different ways.

For Graham, the realization that he could combine a thirst for travel with his dream to start a business came on a spontaneous trip to Peru. “I was on a mountain behind Machu Picchu,” Graham reflects, “checking out the view and a map of Europe were all it took to spark a lifelong passion for travel.”

Successful with more than 70 employees, MonetizeMore has also proven the perfect vehicle to facilitate Graham’s wanderings: since 2010, Graham has operated MonetizeMore independent of location, growing his business from cities all over the world, armed with just a laptop and WiFi connection. Speaking to Business Class from Cape Town, South Africa, Graham highlights the business benefits of this arrangement—an arrangement that on the surface might seem detrimental to the successful growth of a start-up.

“Travelling and living in different cities is definitely better for networking,” he explains. “It’s a very unique and fulfilling way to see the world—especially while building a business.”

Of course, not everybody’s personal and professional goals easily synchronize with a life of perpetual travel, but that doesn’t stop them from relentlessly pursuing the destinations on their must-see list. Wears and her husband Cam were among those facing the conundrum of seemingly opposed career, family and travel goals. Living, working and raising a family in Vancouver, the pair wanted to plant roots for their two young sons, so that’s the direction they went with Curaçao, and we let our oldest pick—we said do you want to see beautiful beaches, or do you want to go to the jungle? He picked beaches, so that’s the direction we went with that one, but Panama will probably be next year. We pick destinations with our kids in mind—but it doesn’t stop us from travelling to destinations that we’re going to enjoy as well!”

Wears highlights some creative steps to achieve this life/travel balance, from making the most of an air miles reward system (“We just went to Ireland on miles!”) to leveraging long weekends to grab a 10-day getaway with just four days off work. But of course travel is meant to be about freedom and relaxation, so to mitigate the potential stress of meticulously planning a trip, the Wears have developed one key strategy that keeps everybody happy. “We recently just got back from Aruba and Curaçao. That was a decision between Panama, or Aruba and Curaçao, and we let our oldest pick—we say don’t want to see Aruba and Curaçao. That was a decision between Panama, or Aruba and Curaçao, and we let our oldest pick—we said do you want to see beautiful beaches, or do you want to go to the jungle? He picked beaches, so that’s the direction we went with that one, but Panama will probably be next year. We pick destinations with our kids in mind—but it doesn’t stop us from travelling to destinations that we’re going to enjoy as well!”

The takeaway? Do your homework on rewards programs and be willing to compromise to keep things simple. Don’t assume that wanderlust precludes your goals as an entrepreneur. And if seeing the world is your dream, don’t ever think you have no choice but to give it up.
Connecting Mops to Floors: The cleaning industry’s “swipe right”

What do we do when faced with a problem? We turn to technology for an answer. But what do we do if the technology doesn’t exist yet?

by Natalie Walters

Nowadays apps help us do everything from selling furniture to finding a date. But when Jesal Shah, MBA ’15, went looking for a last-minute cleaning service to tidy up his short-term rental apartment between bookings, he couldn’t find one.

“No one could do it on short notice,” says Shah. It was this recurring issue that led him to partner with fellow UVic graduates Andrew Spence, MBA ’15, and Abhinav Rai, MBA ’15, to start BnBreeze.

BnBreeze is an online platform that matches people who need their house cleaned with cleaners who are available to do it. Users simply log on, list the service they require and registered cleaners pick up the jobs that fit their schedule. Similar in concept to other services in the sharing or “access” economy, the format is familiar to users of those services—think Airbnb and Zipcar.

“We wanted to make it simple and easy to use,” says Shah. “Like an Uber for cleaning.”

Although simple in concept, the company has been a year in the making. The team balance BnBreeze with full-time jobs and families, each putting in a couple of hours every night to meet their goals.

These goals have changed a bit over time, says Shah, who also cold-called cleaning agents and property owners, and met with cleaning agents and property owners, and met with the idea, expressing interest in a service that would allow them to pick up extra work. However, on the other side of the service, they found there was an opportunity to expand their target audience.

While BnBreeze was originally envisioned as a service specific to rental property owners, they quickly discovered that the need for on-demand cleaning was wide-reaching.

“Everyone from bed and breakfast owners to realtors and ordinary bystanders have expressed interest. “We even had people overhear our conversation in coffee shops and then come up to us and say that they would use the service,” says Spence.

Fueled by this positive feedback, BnBreeze matched someone in need of a same-day cleaning with an available agent during the interview for this article. Registration and job matching numbers are growing between 15-20 per cent each month. Right now BnBreeze is only available in the Greater Victoria area, but next steps include moving into a second market. Long term, Shah would love to see BnBreeze available nationally and expand to other home services such as landscaping and plumbing. In the meantime, they are gaining traction among cleaning agents and property owners, and meeting the demand.

“We get excited about the fact that Jesal wascomplaining about originally,” says Spence. “It’s the first step.”

Photos: istock; (Top) Courtesy of BnBreeze; (Right) uVic Photo services

TravelMetrics: Up-and-comer profile

WHO: Bhupinder Dulku, MBA ’17, and partner Deepali Arora, Ph.D.

WHAT: TravelMetrics is a website for travel planning where users can find information on safety, climate, cost and news relevant to the city they want to travel to. All information is sourced from credible outlets and government institutions before being analyzed by TravelMetrics’ algorithms.

MARKET NEED: “The idea emerged from the realization that there was a gap of trustworthy travel information,” says Dulku. “Those looking to make travel decisions based on cost and safety found the available information was of questionable reliability and lacking the convenience of a centralized repository.”

START-UP RESOURCES: To get to this point Dulku participated in several start-up programs, including the Coast Capital Savings Innovation Centre (formerly the Innovation Centre for Entrepreneurs) Pitch It Competition (1st place) and Plan-It Competition (2nd place). This ultimately led him to the Innovation Centre’s Incubator Program. Each experience along the way taught Dulku how to improve the platform.

“The Incubator Program helped us bring business alignment to our technology,” says Dulku. “We’re really good at designing business alignment to our technology, but we were not connecting that to a business model!”

Eventually Dulku envisions growing TravelMetrics into the go-to platform for travel planning and intelligence. “We’re building an online community that values safety,” he states. Dulku began the VIATEC Venture Acceleration Program in September 2016. Since then he has been focused on getting the project investor-ready.

The BnBreeze team (left to right): Jesal Shah, Andrew Spence, Abhinav Rai
Imagine this—you are on vacation in a city that you have never visited before, and you take a bus tour. Do you think you would react more strongly to a tour with a special, or “peak,” event introduced as a surprise, or to one with a peak event that you were aware of and had been anticipating? Would your feelings change depending on when in the tour this peak event was introduced?

These questions, among others, are explored in “Surprise, Anticipation, and Sequence Tour Sequencing, and What the Research Says About Saving the Best for Last” by Sue Bengtson.

When to Hit the High Note?

Tour sequencing, and what the research says about saving the best for last

by Sue Bengtson

Unknown to the study participants, four of the five stops were designed to be neutral and one stop was designed to be a clear peak event—in this case, a famous restaurant owned by a celebrity. To gain a sense of customer expectations, the tourists were shown a tour outline and asked for their reactions before the tour began. The tourists then experienced the full virtual tour, with the peak event scheduled at one of the following places: at the first stop (early peak); at the third stop (middle peak); or the last stop (end peak).

“Participants overwhelmingly preferred the end peak scenario,” says Victorino. “If you’re in a service situation where there is a clear high point of the experience and there’s flexibility on where it can be placed, this is an interesting data point to keep in mind.”

The results showed when to place a peak event in order to enhance customer perception: last. But there was still the second question: do customers prefer to be surprised by the peak event, or does the opportunity to anticipate add something to the experience?

To evaluate this, participants were broken into two groups. Those experiencing the anticipation design received full communication about the celebrity-owned restaurant and it was clearly marketed to them as the highlight of the tour, including good food, a signature drink, live music and an all-around great experience. For those participants testing the surprise condition, the celebrity restaurant was concealed; the stop was simply described as a visit to a city building. Each tourist received written descriptions and three illustrations of each of the five tour stops.

Some participants were asked for their emotional response and feelings about the tour immediately afterward; others, a week later. Both groups preferred a surprise ending.

The results have design implications for service managers in all areas but especially in a tourism context. Victorino explains that “there is an inherent experiential nature to tourism services and great opportunity to truly delight customers, as most are already in a happy and relaxed mindset, and are often searching to experience something new. In the right environment, our findings suggest that customers are most likely to be delighted when the highlight comes late in the experience—and is a surprise.”

“Customer perception is reality, in the world of service,” Victorino explains. “There is nothing more important when designing experiences.” — Dr. Liana Victorino

Effects in the Design of Experiential Services,” a study recently published in Production and Operations Management by Gustavson’s Dr. Liana Victorino and co-authors Dr. Michael J. Dixon, Ivey School of Business and Drs. Robert J. Kwontnik and Rohit Verma from Cornell University. Design strategy adopts a “service as theatre” metaphor that likens the design of an experience to a performance that can be directed and choreographed.

To explore how a peak event impacted customer experience, the researchers created an online storyboard experiment in which the study participants, or “tourists,” took a virtual bus tour in a hypothetical city.

The context of a city bus tour gave the researchers control over each piece of this service “performance” so that they could examine customer perceptions of two things: 1) the impact of the timing of the peak event and 2) the effect of the peak being a surprise or anticipated.

“Customer perception is reality, in the world of service,” Victorino explains. “There is nothing more important when designing experiences.”
Delivering on Delicious

How to be a foodie without cooking or leaving the house
by Sasha Milam

As a traveller, going out and looking for food—be it the perfect paella or Ma Po tofu to knock your socks off—is often part of the adventure of experiencing a new city. You roam the streets, hear the language and do some people-watching while you eat. Sometimes you find the dish you were craving—and other times you end up lost, hungry and cranky. Which is why sometimes all you want is that perfect paella delivered to your door.

Andrew Sorokovsky, BCom '11, is partnerships manager for Australia/New Zealand at UberEATS, a subset of the ride-sharing company that uses the model of freelance drivers to deliver food orders from any restaurant within the network to your door. Having relocated to Melbourne, Australia from Vancouver in 2016, Sorokovsky has recent experience with eating as a newcomer in a foreign city. “The first four months after I moved here, I cooked twice. My feeling is, why would you need to cook when there are world-class restaurants that are brought to your door?” So when I’ve dialled that back a bit since, but I would say I’m a power user.”

First-hand enjoyment of the service aside, Sorokovsky has a number of reasons for feeling energized by his current position. “We are at the forefront of changing the way people discover and consume food. You can call consumers lazy, but at the end of the day, today’s consumer has different expectations about the quality and convenience of food. And it’s fascinating to be at the crux of that shift.”

As this landscape continues to evolve, there are certain types of restaurants that quickly rise to the top on the back of delivery marketplaces like UberEATS. There are the usual suspects, the ones that immediately come to mind when you think takeout—pizza, burgers, egg rolls. However, the real rising stars are the operations that understand the importance of price point and speed, and are willing to lean into delivery as a central component of the business.

“We’ve had many lesser-known restaurants that have embraced delivery as a part of their operation, and they’ve rocketed to the top. The players with the most potential are the ones that are building delivery-only centres: simply put, kitchen spaces with chefs and easy access for delivery partners. No need to rent a storefront or pay for costly fit-outs or front-of-house staff for this business model.”

For eaters embarking on their own international adventures and planning to be in Australia anytime soon, Sorokovsky leaves us with an insider tip: “Poke is just consuming the country. You could make the argument that, oh, it’s just a bowl of vegetables and fish—it’s basically deconstructed sushi—but it’s all about presentation, and it’s hot here.”

UberEATS is central to this change. “When I left to take my current job, it’s not to say I couldn’t have learned more in my role there; but I was 28, I’d been there five years, and I wanted to challenge myself with something completely different. I wanted to layer in that international aspect, which was how Australia came up. But the fact that UberEATS was a new and fast-growing business and I had no idea about food, the restaurant industry, and consumer tech heading into it was really attractive to me.”

For stakeholders embarking on their own international adventures and planning to be in Australia anytime soon, Sorokovsky leaves us with an insider tip: “Poke is just consuming the country. You could make the argument that, oh, it’s just a bowl of vegetables and fish—it’s basically deconstructed sushi—but it’s all about presentation, and it’s hot here.”

Paella, Ma Po tofu, or poke: no matter how obscure your craving, it seems this brave new world no longer requires you to wander unfamiliar streets to satisfy it—or even change out of your footie pajamas. ■
DONOR FUNDS FUEL SEMESTERS ABROAD

by Erica Youds

This past year Gustavson introduced international study travel grants. Thanks to the generosity of more than 30 alumni and community donors, three undergraduate students were provided with funds to help finance a semester abroad. If you’re interested in supporting future travel grants, visit: extrweb.uvic.ca/innovation/travelgrants

Postcards From Spain
2016 TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT
DEVON CHASE SHARES SNAPSHOT FROM HIS SEMESTER IN SPAIN

What was one thing that surprised you about your experience? How close I would become with the other UVic students who were abroad. Of course, I met many incredible people from around the world who I will be close with for life, but I didn’t expect to return to Canada with some of my new best friends living so close to home!

What is the most important thing someone going abroad for the first time should pack? I think the key message is to not pack too much. So much travelling can be done while on exchange, and being able to put everything that you need for a quick trip in one backpack is a must.

How do you feel the exchange semester changed your view of the world? How did it impact your future career? I met a great group of people in Spain who are interested in the same parts of business as I am. I would not be surprised if one day in the future, due to those connections, I’ll be working in Spain (or another European country) with them.

Postcards From Prague
2016 TRAVEL GRANT RECIPIENT
AUSTIN STUDER HITS THE HIGHLIGHTS OF HER ADVENTURES ABROAD

What was a new business idea or concept you learned while abroad? I learned a lot about different adventure tourism ideas when hiking and camping in Norway. I’d like to make outdoor activities more accessible and affordable for tourists. Often, unless you know locals or can afford your own transportation, many outdoor pursuits are out of reach for visitors.

What was one thing that surprised you about your experience? How kind everyone is all over the world and how willing people are to help you. Honestly, I asked and received so many times. People were so willing to lend a hand. Whether it was hitchhiking across countries or asking for help translating, so many experiences were made possible thanks to the help of others.

What is the most important thing someone going abroad for the first time should pack? A carry-on sized backpack. You would be surprised how much you can fit in it. It saves you SO much money when flying. Some budget airlines charge the same for a checked bag as they do for the original ticket!

What was your most memorable day/moment? My two most memorable days/moments were:
1) Watching the sunset from Pulpit Rock before spending the night camping overlooking Norway’s unbelievable fjords.
2) After spending the night in a mountain refuge and cooking with 20 local Moroccan men, summiting the highest peak in North Africa—Jebel Toubkal.

How did it impact your future career? The experience really propelled me to seek international opportunities and work toward gaining a well-rounded business foundation from different cultures, industries and countries in general. After exchange I had the confidence to seek a co-op position in Australia and I hope to continue working internationally and exploring new countries in the coming years.
EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP

1. “I was on a mountain behind Machu Picchu, checking out the view and thinking about my trip. And I just thought, ‘this has been the time of my life… I want to be able to work and travel, whenever I want, wherever I want.’”

2. “[I was surprised by] how kind everyone is all over the world and how willing people are to help you. Honestly, I asked and received so many times… Whether it was hitchhiking across countries or asking for help translating, so many experiences were made possible thanks to the help of others.”

3. “Our goal in sharing our story is always to help other local businesses enter the market. It’s a competitive industry, so that may seem surprising, but we know that without our local partners and community we would not succeed. Learning and reciprocity is at the heart of what we do.”

4. “I believe in experiences, those moments that make one’s life prettier. Today my ‘product’ is people, whether that’s locals or tourists, and I love it.”

5. “Customer perception is reality, in the world of service.”

6. “We do have incredible gardens and a vibrant, iconic Inner Harbour, but tourism isn’t something that just ‘happens’ because these things are here.”

7. “My feeling is, why would you need to cook when there are world-class restaurants that are brought to your door?”

Name one business in this issue that uses the idea of the “sharing economy.”

Have you read this issue cover to cover? Pair the quotable phrase with the article it came from.

W

ith more than 22,000 people directly employed by the tourism industry in Greater Victoria, the sector is undeniably a key driver of the local economy. Some of the city’s popularity with travellers is due to its unique history and temperate climate, but there are also organizations dedicated to ensuring Victoria remains top of mind as a year-round destination.

Michelle Butterfield, BCom ’14, in her role as content marketing specialist at Tourism Victoria, supports the organization’s objectives through strategic use of their digital marketing channels. Business Class met up with Butterfield to get a feel for the shape of her days as a digital storyteller in this booming sector.

What elements of your education at Gustavson contributed to your current success?

A The wonderful thing about the Gustavson program is that it allows students to take classes in a broad range of topics before choosing an area of specialization. I took everything from operations and marketing to finance and accounting. Through this, I realized that I love the creativity of marketing and the science of market research, both of which I put into practice every day in my current position.

”V” is for Victoria!

Q&A with travel marketer Michelle Butterfield

by Sheryl Gray
looking back at the last eight years of my life, my greatest source of passion is clear: travel and exploring new cultures. It’s what inspired me to pursue a Master of Global Business degree; to start a consulting company in Chile; to painstakingly learn Spanish; to spend eight months volunteering in Peru; and to write about travel, in the hope that I might inspire just one other person to step outside his or her comfort zone and click “book” on that airline ticket.

It was exactly such a mouse-click that changed my life eight years ago. I didn’t grow up travelling abroad. In fact, at the age of 19 I had travelled to exactly two countries: Canada and the U.S. When the chance arose to leave the nest for an exchange semester during my BCom, I was apprehensive. As a good business student, I thought about both the real and opportunity cost of living abroad: the cost of airline tickets and passport fees, the lost part-time work opportunities. There were so many reasons not to go—or so I thought.

As I’ve done so many times since, I jumped in with both feet despite my trepidation. Months later, I returned from an exchange semester to Singapore having lived, dined, studied and commuted as a Singaporean. By then, I had witnessed the seemingly never-ending sunsets in Malaysian Borneo, sleepily watched the same sun rise over Angkor Wat in Cambodia, and enjoyed the best curry of my life in Thailand. Most importantly, I could now count many new and incredible people among my friends. It’s not something I’ve so much as considered giving up since. In the past eight years, I’ve visited 23 different countries, spending a good part of my time outside Canada. Volunteering abroad and meeting new people along the way brought me to the current stage of my journey—managing a kitesurfing school in Peru and writing about travel professionally.

If you had told me prior to going abroad for the first time that I would be doing either of these things, I would have laughed you down, but here I am. That’s the beauty of travel. That’s the power of giving it a try, even—or especially—if you’re afraid at first, or don’t see the business sense.

As one friend to another, I’ll let you take it from here. I’m not so presumptuous as to expect that these words alone will change your outlook on life, but I know from experience that travelling will. At the very least you’ll likely discover a new passion. And who knows, you may even discover a new profession!
Canada @ 150:

PROMOTING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

November 17 to 19, 2017

The University of Victoria and Global Affairs Canada are hosting the inaugural Victoria Forum. This event will feature prominent Canadian and international participants who will discuss diversity and inclusion in the 21st century.

With the emergence of populist agendas, in the face of declining trust in our key institutions, there has been a trend towards increasing protectionism and anxiety about migration worldwide. It is critical that an alternative view be presented.

The Victoria Forum will share learnings, stimulate fresh thinking and motivate participants to give life to these new ideas in their own businesses and communities.

Visit uvic.ca/victoriaforum for information and to register to be a part of this open, accessible, inclusive space for evidence-based conversation.

Partners: Canadian International Council (Victoria), Conference Board of Canada, Global Centre for Pluralism, Philanthropic Foundations Canada, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, World Wildlife Fund Canada.