

Sandra Sanderson Honoured with Canadian Grand Prix Lifetime Achievement Award

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TORONTO, ON – April 15, 2026 - [Retail Council of Canada](#) (RCC) is proud to recognize **Sandra Sanderson**, Chief Marketing Officer of Empire Company Limited and Sobeys Inc., with the [Canadian Grand Prix Lifetime Achievement Award](#), in recognition of her extraordinary contributions, leadership, and decades of dedication to retail in Canada.

"Sandra Sanderson has set the standard for what great retail marketing leadership looks like in Canada.," said Kim Furlong, President and CEO of Retail Council of Canada. "She leads with rigour and purpose, builds brands that genuinely connect with consumers, and does it all with a generosity of spirit that has made her a mentor and a model for the next generation of retail leaders. Her contributions to Canadian retail are both profound and enduring."

With a career spanning both CPG and retail, Sanderson brings a rare 360-degree understanding of the Canadian consumer to everything she leads. After building her marketing expertise in consumer-packaged goods at Procter & Gamble, Kraft, and Coca-Cola, she decided to pursue retail, drawn by the opportunity to forge a closer, more direct relationship with shoppers. Her leadership roles at Canada Post, Danier Leather, Shoppers Drug Mart, Walmart Canada and White House Black Market in the United States built a breadth of perspective that few marketing executives in Canadian retail can match.

Today, as Chief Marketing Officer of Empire Company Limited and Sobeys Inc., Sanderson leads marketing across one of Canada's largest retail portfolios, including Sobeys, Safeway, IGA, Thrifty Foods, Foodland, FreshCo and Lawton's. As part of Empire's Executive Team, Sanderson played a pivotal role in the Company's bold multi-phased transformation over her 7+ year tenure. She modernized marketing to meet the rapidly shifting expectations of the Canadian consumer, creating a Marketing Technology & Digital Center of Excellence. She led the successful transformation of Empire's loyalty program with the launch of Scene+, which has grown to over 15 million members. Sanderson also championed the company's entry into the retail media space with the launch of Empire Media+.

Sanderson demonstrates purpose-driven leadership and has long championed the idea that retail brands must serve a greater purpose within their communities. Under her stewardship, Empire created a new community investment strategy, including the launch of *Family of Support: Child & Youth Mental Health* initiative, the first national philanthropic partnership between the Sobey family and the business. She also established Empire as the *Official Grocer of Team Canada*, overseeing the impactful "Feed The Dream" Olympic and Paralympic campaigns.

Sanderson's contributions have earned her the industry's highest recognition. She received the Canadian Marketing Association Lifetime Achievement Award in 2025 and was inducted into the AMA Marketing Hall of Legends in 2023. She has been named Marketer of the Year three times (CMA 2020; *Strategy* 2012

and 2021) and was recognized as a Star Women in Grocery Award recipient in 2015. She currently serves as a Board Director for Special Olympics Canada and Scene+ and has held a leadership role as Vice-Chair of the Canadian Marketing Association. She has mentored emerging talent through the AMA Mentor Exchange and served as a guest lecturer at the Ivey Business School for the last 3 years.

Sandra Sanderson joins a distinguished list of past Lifetime Achievement recipients from across Canada that include Burnbrae Farms' President & CEO, Margaret Hudson, Kruger Products CEO Dino Bianco, METRO Inc. EVP Carmen Fortino and Unilever Canada President Gary Wade.

The Lifetime Achievement Award will be presented to Sandra Sanderson at RCC's Canadian Grand Prix Awards Gala on June 3, 2026, at the Toronto Congress Centre. The Gala will mark the closing celebration of [RCCSTORE26](#), RCC's premier retail industry conference. Tickets for the Gala are available at [RCCGrandPrix.ca](#).

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About the Canadian Grand Prix Awards

The Canadian Grand Prix Awards are presented annually by Retail Council of Canada to honour outstanding performance and innovation across the Canadian grocery industry. The Lifetime Achievement Award honours individuals and families who have demonstrated outstanding service and dedication to the Canadian retail and grocery industries. Recipients reflect the industry's spirit of community and trust through a lifelong commitment to growth, innovation, and philanthropy.

About Retail Council of Canada

Retail is Canada's largest private-sector employer with over 2.3 million Canadians working in our industry. This sector is a major economic contributor, generating more than \$101 billion annually in wages and employee benefits. In 2025, core retail sales (excluding vehicles and gasoline) exceeded \$532 billion. Retail Council of Canada (RCC) members account for more than two thirds of these core retail sales and 95 per cent of the grocery market. Our membership extends across the country, embracing over 65,000 storefronts in diverse formats such as department, grocery, specialty, discount, independent retailers, online merchants, and quick service restaurants. As the Voice of Retail™ in Canada, RCC, a not-for-profit, industry-funded association, proudly represents retail businesses of all sizes, from small independents to large national chains, in communities nationwide.

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