



# THE WORLD'S LEADING INDEPENDENT AGENCIES 2013

by invitation of



thenetworkone®

published by

**campaign**

if you are a marketer and would like  
impartial advice on how the world's  
leading independent agencies could  
help build your business, call  
Julian Boulding.  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7240 7117  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7681 1102  
[julian.boulding@thenetworkone.com](mailto:julian.boulding@thenetworkone.com)

if you work for an agency and would like  
to hook up with great agency partners  
in other countries, call  
Paul Squirrell.  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7240 7117  
Fax: +44 (0)20 7681 1102  
[paul.squirrell@thenetworkone.com](mailto:paul.squirrell@thenetworkone.com)



# For clients, size does not matter

Displaying a newfound confidence, independent agencies have begun to realise that they can satisfy brands in ways larger network rivals cannot



Julian Boulding

For the past seven years, thenetworkone has published this annual collection of essays with *Campaign*. We ask contributors to write a piece that will be interesting to read and reflects their values, without being a sales pitch. We don't prescribe a specific theme or tone of voice.

So how the mood of the publication changes each year is revealing. In the past, it has often been quite defiant. "Why should the networks have all the fun? Independents are just as good."

This year, the mood is different. It's one of confidence.

Confidence that an independent agency can handle a major global advertising account, in a better way than a traditional network.

Confidence to form a new agency that reinvents the concept of a PR company.

Confidence to do what's right, not only what is profitable. To scour the world for new ideas. And technologies. To spend time on a client's business, beyond the billable hours.

Confidence to experiment, knowing that, in the age of big data, it's easier to see what really changes customer behaviour; and confidence in the agency's ability to react quickly and alter course, when things don't go perfectly.

The traditional networks and holding companies answer back: "It's all about scale. China is a big place and if you don't have several hundred employees, you won't succeed." But they are wrong.

Scale is important for some things. It's important in buying mass media, where the networks score well; and in buying digital media, where the fleet-of-foot exchanges are eating their lunch at a rapid rate.

But scale drives commoditisation: the enemy of creativity (and of agency profit margins). Scale does not make you smart.

To sell smart, you have to think smart. Be knowledgeable, perceptive, entrepreneurial and agile, and deliver something the competition hasn't yet discovered.

Let me end with a personal anecdote. Last month, I visited Myanmar for the first time – the country that has been effectively closed off to the West for most of the past ten years. No credit cards, no Western mobiles... no Procter & Gamble, no Coca-Cola.

I hailed a taxi in Yangon. The driver only spoke around ten words of English, so we started on that universal topic of conversation: football. "Who your team?" "Tottenham Hotspur." "Ah, Tottenham... Gareth Bale!" Now, Tottenham doesn't even play in the Champions League and, last year, no-one had heard of Bale.

But this season, he has perfected a technique of bending the ball upwards and downwards (not sideways like Beckham) and it beats goalkeepers every time. Intelligent, enterprising, unique and successful.

The taxi driver in Yangon is our consumer today. Turn the pages of this publication and decide for yourself who is the next Gareth Bale. **Julian Boulding is the president of thenetworkone**

## Contents

Happiness	5
MBA	7
DaDeDo	8
El Laboratorio	9
Grabarz & Partner	10
Ideal	11
Karmarama	12
Kolle Rebbe	13
SapientNitro Europe	14
The Hallway	15
The Jupiter Drawing Room	16
The Secret Little Agency	17
WE Marketing Group	18

## campaign

Campaign, 174 Hammersmith Road, London W6 7JP [campaign@haymarket.com](mailto:campaign@haymarket.com) [www.campaignlive.co.uk](http://www.campaignlive.co.uk)

**Editorial enquiries (020) 8267 4744**  
**Consultant editor** Suzanne Bidlake, **Art director** Justin Marshall, **Managing editor** Michael Porter, **Chief sub-editor** Sami Shah, **Sub-editors** Maria lu, Tim Mawdsley, **Head of production** Gary Charlton, **Deputy production manager** Lucy Flatman, **International account manager** Michael Baker, **Group commercial director** Lisa Lione, **Group brand manager** Graham Naughton, **Group publishing director** Richard Watts

campaign® is a registered trademark of Haymarket Business Publications Ltd, 174 Hammersmith Road, London W6 7JP. © No part of this publication may be produced without permission of the publishers.



Refresh this page on  
[www.happiness-brussels.com](http://www.happiness-brussels.com)





# Happiness

Your agency should do anything to make people happy. Because happy people make great work and great work is what makes people happy

Everything is media. Everyone is media. That was our ethos when we launched Happiness seven years ago. A tree that talks via its social networks, a BP oil spill that has a message for the world (Oil And Water Do Not Mix) and a car that completes Google Street View. Such is the creative output of that thinking.

## Some principles for happiness

**We are UPMS.** Or, rather: Undefined Perpetually Mutating Specimen. The world is moving fast and we have to move faster. From the moment we think we are there, we have to move on again. We are agile, imaginative and pragmatic at the same time. We are constantly evolving and never standing still. We avoid doing the same thing twice. Being UPMS is crucial and at the heart of the whole Happiness philosophy. People are hired on it. People leave for it.

**We believe in creative management.** No creativity for the sake of creativity. No books of strategy for the sake of strategy. Our concept providers can't think out of the box if the box is not defined. The more "right" the strategy, the further you can push creativity. Because it stays "right" for the brand – and the business.

**We organise UPMS.** We have defined processes at Happiness. Our agency heads are involved in the creative process until a concept is cracked and sold. Then others take over – everyone with the same pursuit of excellence. So we avoid bottlenecks. At the client end, but also at the agency.

**We don't believe in advertising.** We changed the advertising narrative. We don't apply the usual techniques. From day one, our work has been simple and direct, with the product or service at the centre. No bullshit. It's in our DNA.

**We make it happen.** Ideas in the drawer don't exist. Ideas in the fridge don't keep. Ideas are only your own if you make them happen.

**We are smart and sexy.** We choose our battles with clients. We are gently soft and sexy. We work as hard for their big, visible ideas as we do for their smaller needs. We are concerned with our client's business as if it was our own, so we inspire confidence and can bring an idea that takes everyone out of their comfort zones.

**We kick the talent's arses.** We believe in the combination of experienced people and those fresh out of school. We are not concerned by job titles but by CVs and portfolios. Great talents have left us for great jobs at great agencies around the world. We are proud to see them go.



Corrigan... 'We don't try to change people's behaviour; we try to understand their essence and invent added-value services'

To form them, we invest in them. Every month, we elect a "creative director of the month" so they can feel what it is to be a creative director, to take the big decisions and to sell them. And we can see who's got what.

## A formula that works: 4C&T

**Concept.** Many things are changing, but one thing never will: great communications will always need a great concept at their heart. Start with a clean sheet. Get the strategy right. Assemble top talent. Go beyond accepted thinking. Work until it works. We introduced concept providers.

**Content.** Great concepts contain new and useful content – be it hu-

mour, useful information, innovation, involvement, community or an app that makes life easier. We don't try to change people's needs or behaviour; we try to understand their very essence and invent added-value services upon that. What is the next-but-one big thing? For the French fashion giant Pimkie, it's software that communicates trending fashion colours live from the fashion capitals of Paris, Milan and Antwerp. It helps people with their daily concern: what shall I wear today? We introduced content providers.

**Community.** Before, we organised the communities; now communities get organised. We go after them, or they come after us. They can make or break a campaign and a brand. We nurture our communities and treat them with respect. Social media creates the power, but the public owns it. How you join with them (or not) in their own ecosystem will decide the success of your brand, and success has moved beyond "likes" to shares and views. There is no place to hide. We introduced "communitologists" to research well-defined communities before launching a campaign.

**Commerce.** If it's not selling, it's not creative. Creativity in isolation never won you a Grand Prix at Cannes or respect from clients. Creative campaigns are selling tools in disguise. The Pimkie Color Forecast website, which links trending colours to Pimkie apparel that you can buy in a click, is a seamless consumer experience

with a direct return on investment. Our own industry's challenge in the coming years will be to be creative in the work as well as creative in the way in which we are paid for it.

**Technology.** We are known for pushing technological boundaries. When we set up, our creative directors had "R&D" on their business cards. Yet we remain digital virgins. We don't believe in adapting an idea to technology, but in adapting technology to an idea.

**Concept first.** The right technological solution will follow. We don't take "no" for an answer. Technology isn't the biggest concern – imagination is. Our digital technologists are based at our Brussels offices, BLISS interactive Europe, and in Ho Chi Minh City. They are trained to be the best solution providers in the world for all interactive and mobile ideas. They know they can't kill an idea on the basis of a technological "not possible" judgment. Rather, they need to come up with a solution to make it happen. Hence the name BLISS, which is one step further than Happiness.

Our motto is: we do anything to make people happy. Because happy people make great work, and great work is what makes people happy.

*Karen Corrigan is the chief executive, strategy and concept director and co-founder of Happiness, and the co-founder of BLISS interactive Europe/Ho Chi Minh*

## At a glance

**Founded** 2005

**Principal** Karen Corrigan, chief executive, strategy and concept director and co-founder

**Staff** 75

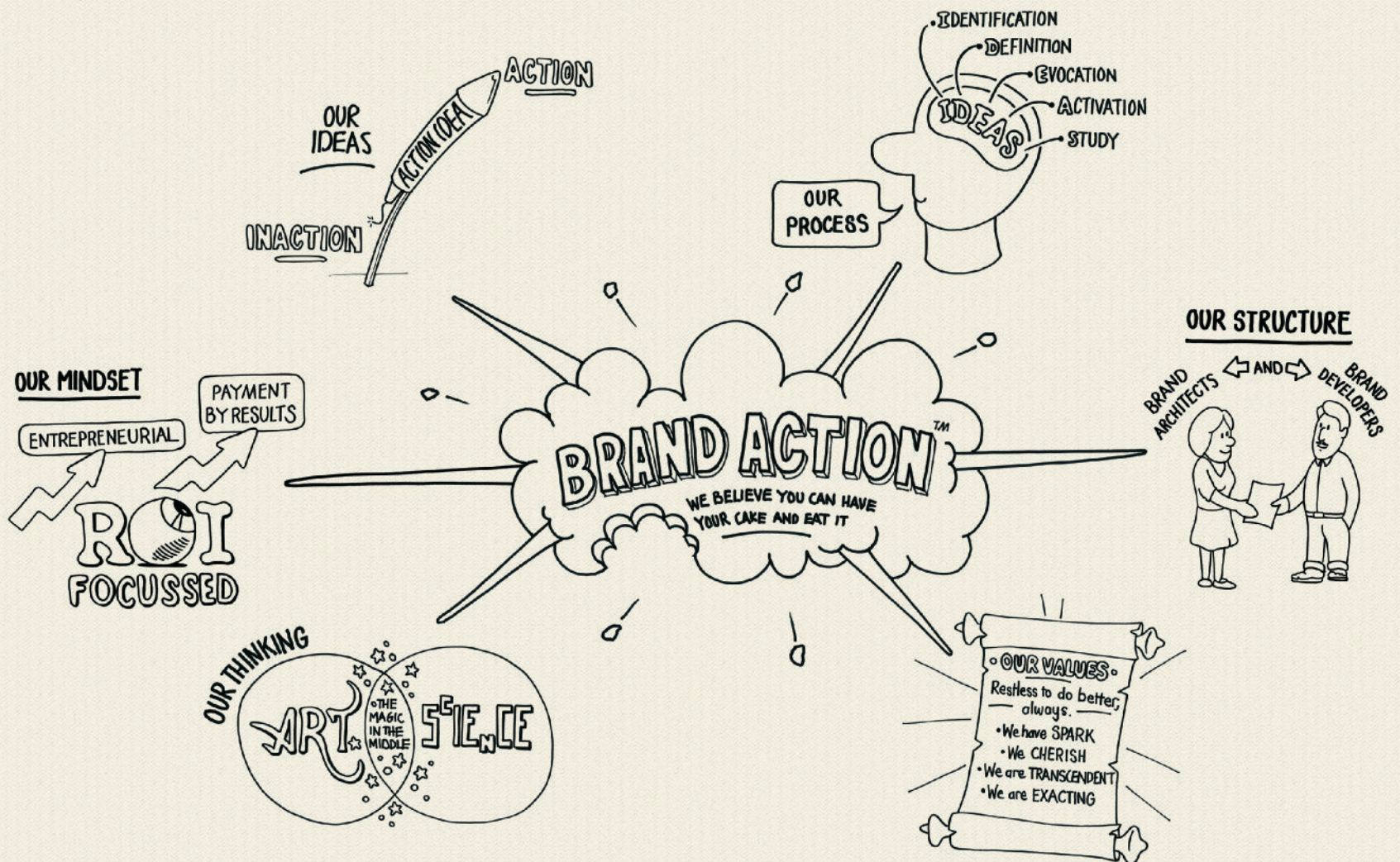
**Locations** Brussels. Antwerp, Ho Chi Minh City (BLISS interactive)

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** The Hellmann's Recipe Receipt. It installed software on supermarket tills that recognised when consumers bought Hellmann's and printed a recipe on the receipt based on the other ingredients that were bought

**Learnt anything new lately?** Every second is about learning things



We make sure businesses  
have a plan of **Brand Action™**



**mBA**

We're a creative agency for the digitally integrated world.

Contact James Middlehurst on **020 7309 7253** or visit [mba.co.uk](http://mba.co.uk)



# MBA

Agencies need to adapt to changing culture and technology but, as Don Draper showed, without losing sight of communications' basic truths

Dealing with change is always hard. Especially when what has changed keeps on changing. The landscape around us is forever in a state of flux as technology evolves to have a more deeply integrated and more meaningful impact on our lives. But people are still people. New technology has simply enabled normal human behaviour to be amplified to a previously unimaginable scale. Emotional ideas still resonate and motivate people.

[*Mad Men* spoiler] Adapting to changing culture and technology is nothing new for agencies. In series five of *Mad Men*, Don Draper is out of sorts. His mind isn't on the game and the younger folk are the ones coming up with the ideas. He struggles with the music and references that they're suggesting. But, ultimately, he catches up by applying his understanding of people and communications to the new context that surrounds him.

So, yes, agencies need to adapt to stay relevant. And they need to adapt to being fundamentally more adaptable. Change is constant. Evolving simply to catch up means you'll be outdated again within an incredibly small amount of time. But a lot of what we know and do will stay relevant. The creativity, the ideas, the understanding of human motivation will remain. Of course, these fundamentals must be viewed through the lens of the digitally integrated world, rather than that of *Mad Men*.

For ongoing success, agencies must focus around balancing these two issues – making sure they are constantly embracing change and also not losing sight of the time-proven fundamentals.

Culture is critical to any business. We believe that agencies should heed what Jack London once said: "You can't wait for inspiration. You have to go after it with a club." We gather good ideas from anywhere and everywhere. We encourage people to hunt and share the awesome they stumble across via our blog Interestingness. We treat creative as a discipline, not a department, frequently briefing the whole agency on projects. People actively seek out lectures and other learning opportunities – in the past 12 months, we've heard from Seth Godin, Henry Jenkins, Mark Earls and Dan Ariely, in addition to secondments to the Squared (Google and Hyper Island) programme. We've been to China, Brazil and the US on fact-finding missions. People come back bubbling with ideas that help shape our approach for clients such as Avios and Amazon's LoveFilm.



Devon (left) and Maher... 'agencies must make sure they embrace change and not lose sight of the time-proven fundamentals'

Being at the forefront of technological development is critical. We have spoken many times about the special relationship between creativity and technology, with each nurturing the other. MBA has fingers in many pies here – we are a founder of The Bakery (the IPA-backed tech accelerator programme), we participate in the Marketing Society/Seedcamp pro-

gramme and we are involved with the Government's Technology Strategy Board. We attend events where captains of industry and technology entrepreneurs reveal their secrets. The sum of this is being able to inspire our clients with both novel ways of iterating existing ideas and also new types of ideas. For example, we helped our client Embraer Executive Jets develop a spectacular globe with touch-screen technology for use at air shows that shows the ranges of various jets taking off from specific airports.

Agencies must harness the talents of the next generation – they are already digitally integrated. Soon, people coming our way will have lived their conscious life with Facebook and smartphones. We're actively involved in finding the best young talent that is out there and nurturing them to be brilliant. This is not only traditional graduate recruitment and making the most of the various creative apprentice programmes that are available, but also by creating our very own #ideacademy. This is a global search with a rigorous 24-hour "ideathon" (with several industry leaders in the judging panel) that will lead to a paid internship.

At the same time, we are retaining

and nurturing core skills – those fundamentals that allowed Draper to catch up again. We must continue to make an emotional connection with our audience. And we must continue to find ways to encourage them to change behaviour. We must continue to deliver Brand Action™. To do this, we're structured around a principle of "architects and developers". The former have "renaissance" minds, able to think broadly across disciplines to solve problems. The latter are specialists in specific fields and able to craft an idea brilliantly.

Agencies must balance the fundamentals of our business (the ability to create emotional connection through creative ideas, the understanding of people and delivery of appropriate content) with the necessity to constantly evolve to stay at the top of their game. At MBA, our way of achieving this is through a learning culture, a cutting-edge understanding of technology, investment in youth and a structure that gets the best from people. We're a creative agency for a digitally integrated world.

*James Devon is the planning director and Stephen Maher is the chief executive at MBA*

## At a glance

**Founded** 1994

**Principals** Stephen Maher, chief executive; Graham Kerr, chairman and executive creative director; James Devon, planning director; James Middlehurst, managing partner; Paul Munce, managing partner

**Staff** 45

**Locations** London, Miami

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Heinz "get well soup" is charming, especially because it spans the digital/real boundary

**Learnt anything new lately?** The wisdom of years still applies in today's (and tomorrow's) digitally integrated world



# DaDeDo

Today's agencies shouldn't be in the advertising business; they should be in the creative, socioeconomic community development business

**D**esert: Looking at it from a distance, the desert looks empty, static and dead. Upon closer view, one discovers a richness of life and diversity. The daily transformations of the sand dunes take place at a very subtle pace that we barely notice, while deep inside it hides a wealth of water and oil.

This is our desert and this is who we are. It may seem that we all wear the same white *ghetra* on our heads and the women wear the monotonous black veils – but look closer, discover our diversity. We may sound the same – but listen carefully, listen to the cry for identity.

The oil-rich deserts of the Arabian Gulf have given rise to one of the wealthiest regions of the world. Here, we have excelled in adopting all kinds of global brands, but have failed to produce any brands of our own that have penetrated global markets. This deficiency has a lot to do with design and creative communication, which are two of the most important pillars in building global competitive advantage.

Design and creative communication derive their life force from a well-defined cultural identity. In a region such as the Arabian Gulf, where the vocabulary of the contemporary cultural identity is behind closed doors and not well-understood and identified, and where 99 per cent of the creative industry is being run by expatriates, it becomes almost impossible for an indigenous creative movement to emerge – hence no competitive advantage, no global brands.

In the conservative societies of the Arabian Gulf, to be local is to be... local! In 2009, we decided to be just that – launching DarOtakin as the “local Gulf Cooperation Council agency” with a majority of local talent to start an indigenous creative movement and design school of thought.

## ...and the Earth:

There is a revolution of consciousness in the world today. A movement towards responsibility and healing that is fuelled by our decades-long guilt of overconsumption. Consumers are “the people” now, and they are looking to share power with brands – the power to change things for the better.

Global brands today are some of the most powerful organisations in the world. In fact, they are more powerful than many governments as they penetrate geographical and cultural borders without restriction. They dominate our physical, cultural and



Alolaiwat... ‘Consumers are looking to share power with brands – the power to change things for the better’

mental space. However, this power is being questioned. As consumer consciousness advances, we start demanding more for our loyalty. Your product will have to contribute some value to society and “the people” are interested in your contribution to goodness and prosperity.

Marketers are being challenged to go beyond the eye candy and the creative media cocktails and invest their

extensive budgets in authentic, value-adding vehicles for the socioeconomic, cultural and environmental sustainability of their local communities, and the world as a whole. This movement redefines the role and structure of the creative agency.

Not only are the lines between the various disciplines in the comms industry blurring, such as in branding, PR, advertising and digital, but, more importantly, the lines between Madison Avenue, Hollywood and Silicon Valley are blurring too. We are in the branded entertainment and content age (or should we call it the branded creative industries age?).

The new agency executive is a creative producer who can work across many disciplines to produce unprecedented content. Not just internet videos, video games or apps, but theatre, festivals, agency-conceived products and services, and whole new concepts that we haven't even begun to imagine.

There may not be a creative award category for it yet, but I assure you that creative works of genius will always be seen.

Agencies will not get away with safe

client-maintenance policies any more. They're going to have to take risks and venture where no agency has gone before. The award-winning work of Droga5 is a great example of the effectiveness of such unconventional approaches.

In January, we threw off the shackles of the past and restructured our agency to create a hybrid between a management consultant, a creative producer and an integrated media innovator. We also took the bold move to refocus our brand from DarOtakin to DaDeDo... embracing a “brave, fluid and authentic” tomorrow. Please allow me: earth, meet desert... desert, meet earth.

I believe creative minds can change the world. Our world – and our local communities – face baffling new challenges for which the old models employed by development consultants no longer work. We need to call up “the crazy ones, the round pegs in the square holes”, who are accustomed to starting from a blank page. It's time to change the world.

*Faeq Alolaiwat is the chief executive and creative officer of DaDeDo*

## At a glance

**Founded** 2009

**Principal** Faeq Alolaiwat, chief executive and creative officer

**Staff** 27

**Locations** Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Kony 2012. Compelling storytelling technique using digital media to inspire a global audience to view, share and act

**Learnt anything new lately?** The line between imagination and reality is also imaginary



# El Laboratorio

As the bridge between brands and consumers, agencies should think less about what to say to people and more about what to do for people

It's likely that many of you have at some time read "Banksy on Advertising". It's heart-rending.

For those of you who haven't, let me remind you of some of the insults that he dedicated to us: "People are taking the piss out of you everyday. They butt into your life, take a cheap shot at you and then disappear. They leer at you from tall buildings and make you feel small. They make flippant comments from buses that imply you're not sexy enough and that all the fun is happening somewhere else. They are on TV making your girlfriend feel inadequate. They have access to the most sophisticated technology the world has ever seen and they bully you with it. They are 'The Advertisers' and they are laughing at you."

This is how Banksy sees our profession: yesterday, egocentric and self-satisfying; today, flabbergasted and dazed.

And he adds an eloquent afterthought: "Fuck that." Wow.

You can't say that Banksy is an anarchist. We, at least, wouldn't call him that – someone who sells his work at auction houses in London for figures superior to an agency fee. He can't be an anarchist – he's someone who uses marketing with great skill to increase the value of what he does (although he may do it intuitively).

That's precisely what worries us. That voice doesn't come from the outside, it's coming from the inside. Banksy's voice could be the voice of our neighbours, our brother-in-law, those normal guys at the gym. He says some very harsh things. The worst thing is that we know why he says them. Secretly, we know that we deserve it.

Today, we take part in an expensive game of hide-and-seek in which brands pay to chase people, while those who can pay can escape the pestering: pay-TV without ads, premium apps without ads, digital press without ads.

In Spain, we've recently discovered that the social valuation of advertising people ranks below that of the clergy and only just above bankers. Too many years talking from up above, from those tall buildings. Seeing those little people whom we thought we could wrap up in a stereotype. We don't know anything about them. To tell the truth, we didn't care about them. We spoke to them as if we were talking to a hypnotised crowd. Even direct marketing, which presumed to know them by name, called them Mr John Sample.

It's not surprising that they are pissed off.



Holemans, Silvela and de Madariaga (left to right)... 'we aren't resigned to work on something that people hate'

## At a glance

**Founded** 2001

**Principals** Marisa de Madariaga, founder and chief executive; Carlos Holemans, founder and chief creative officer; Rafael Silvela, managing director; Carla Romeu, executive creative director; Jesús Lada, executive creative director

**Staff** 42

**Location** Madrid

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** "Small business Saturday" for American Express. A glorious example of when a brand worries and does something positive for its community and gets a multiplied answer in return

**Learnt anything new lately?** When you do something for people, they respond generously. Our recent campaign for Trina, a drink from Orangina Schweppes, consisted of artists recording new versions of songs. We gave away one song every week and almost four million people logged on to YouTube. Shazam highlighted the initiative as one of the 15 most-tagged in the world

The bad news is that we were mistaken: the crowd doesn't exist. What we called audience is a myriad of unique individuals who think and have opinions. Although their opinions confuse us.

The good news is that we were mistaken. So there's hope.

Some brands have already understood that, just because they have loads of money, they can't get everything they want. It could be that, by paying, you get to where people are, but that doesn't mean you get to their hearts or minds.

To do this, you need intelligence and sensitivity to do extraordinary things. They could be applications, games, ideas that people will make their own; they could be ads that are really trailers for full-length films that live on the internet; they could be music. Whatever they are, they will be extraordinary.

Agencies and advertisers, we've spent decades worrying about what we were going to say to people. Now, it's time to think about what we are going to give people. What we are going to do for them. The agency that we dreamt of seems to be more and more a promoter of ideas. In reality, a kind of bridge-builder. Building bridges between brands and people.

The big changes throughout history have meant migrations, either physical or mental.

We are emigrating from the culture of the assignment to the culture of invention. Right up until recently,

we waited at our desk for the brief to arrive – the assignment – to give an answer. But, from now on, we'll invest resources, time and money to invent those bridges that connect brands and people. Because that's what it's all about – reaching people, not attracting them like the Pied Piper of Hamelin. People have already discovered that the piper played captivating melodies just to drown the rats. Whatever it is, a river of water or a river of GRPs.

Banksy's words impress us all the more because we aren't resigned to work on something that people hate. We aren't going to accept that our work is rubbish that everyone wants to escape from. No. That's not the reason we get up every morning. We openly rebel against that curse.

We strongly believe that we can produce something beautiful, something intelligent and, what's more, something useful. Extraordinary ideas that entertain, make people smile, stimulate the intellect, dazzle with their ingenuity and beauty. That thrill and excite people. We weren't born with talent just to torment our fellow man. I don't know about you, but we're not going to put up with that. When we switch off the light at night and mull over the day, we like to think that what we did today was worth it.

Goodnight. More tomorrow.

*Carlos Holemans is a founder and the chief creative officer at El Laboratorio*



# Grabarz & Partner

Whether you are designing a book of matches or rolling out a global campaign, paying proper attention to creativity can make a big difference

**T**his is the story of a book of matches. To be precise: it is not about a book of matches, but *the* book of matches. Not some pitiful effort in Colour Index colours with a logo on it. No. One with a unique idea and a fantastic cover.

One that I, as a consumer, hold in my hand and that puts a smile on my face.

One that I am happy to put in my pocket, because it's more than just a holder for matches.

One that I want to show to my friends: "Hey, Tom. Have a look at this... how good is that?"

One that I like to leave on the table, so that others can also see it.

One that I guard carefully and from which I tear off very few matches so that it doesn't run out too quickly.

One that makes me say: "It's brilliant that this brand has come up with something like that."

Just a small, inconsequential book of matches that appeals to me and seduces me a teensy-weensy bit. An amoeba of a product in the grand scheme of generating fascination for a brand.

"You're driving me crazy" was the cry of our client after the third phone call on the subject of the aforementioned giveaway. What was the background to this briefing? What kind of target group are we dealing with? In what kind of standard situations are books of matches used these days? What has the customer previously done with books of matches? What is the international creative standard in relation to books of matches? And could this tiny book of matches possibly be a springboard for something bigger?

Answering so many questions naturally takes up quite a lot of time. And all this for the design of a book of matches. For this small, piffing, standard advertising material. Hasn't the agency got anything better to do? Why are they bothering us with all these dumb questions for a throwaway article? And, anyway, there's only a limited budget. If someone wants to increase it, it will have to be specially authorised, which means more questions and more work.

But this is precisely where we, as an agency, have to dig in. Because, hey, there are so many opportunities to create a book of matches that has a positive effect on customers and the brand – particularly since nobody seems to make an effort any longer when it comes to producing books of matches. No thought goes into it, no love – it's all so standard.



Eickhoff... 'Creativity needs just as much room as market studies, research into consumer insights or touchpoint analyses'

Yet people don't like standard. Standard is not valued. Standard is not rewarded. Standard is not shared and passed on. Standard simply

doesn't sell. If companies rate their own products and services as standard, they may as well pack it all in now – because it means they no longer have any drive, they are no longer exacting enough, no longer meticulous. They no longer pay attention to detail and are no longer on the lookout for ways to improve.

And that is precisely why we have to value the small things – no matter whether it really does just involve a book of matches or it relates to the global roll-out of a brand campaign. Every little detail comes into contact with a person – and is, thus, also worth the effort.

That works out all the better if we consider the book of matches as more than just a book of matches, if we see opportunities and not risks, and if we create things rather than just knock them out.

Needless to say, creativity doesn't work against the brand, but always serves it, and companies and marketing activities have to afford it greater room and dedicate more time and energy to it. It needs just as much room as market and consumer stud-

ies, as research into consumer insights, as touchpoint analyses, as the creation of needs pyramids or the analysis of neural spaces.

And it needs our protection – protection so that all processes, controls and hierarchy levels can survive.

Consumers build their own brands – we don't do it for them.

They do it by piecing together the many small facets that, for them, are essential and relevant. Our job is to give them as much of the right building material at every level. Only then are they willing to become brand ambassadors.

This is difficult and it involves a great deal of work, discussion and analysis – even when it comes to a book of matches. But when we delight the consumer and have a positive effect on them with the help of our creativity – so that they talk about us – then we have taken another step forward in developing the brand.

From this perspective, we are happy to be crazy.

*Thomas Eickhoff is a managing director/partner at Grabarz & Partner*

## At a glance

**Founded** 1993

**Principals** Ralf Heuel, managing director (creative); Hartmut Kozok, MD (creative); Thomas Eickhoff, MD (client service); Reinhardt Patzschke, MD (client service); Tobias Clairmont, MD (client service); Anne Jezuita, MD (finance)

**Staff** 207

**Location** Hamburg

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Red Bull Stratos – for proving that you can be in the stratosphere yet still remain at the heart of the brand

**Learnt anything new lately?** A little Chinese, because we have been advising a Chinese agency partner about the roll-out of a brand campaign for Volkswagen



# Ideal

Brands need more than branding – they need a reputation, and to deliver this you need people who are not too attached to agency orthodoxy

**M**ost people in communications see advertising agencies – and other types of agencies, including the so-called “specialists” – in different groups. Whether by habit or convenience, the truth is that it became much easier for the market to label the competencies of the first group (creativity, media planning, research) than the characteristics of the specialists, which are usually identified by a single skill, such as digital, PR or branded content, for example.

But consumers' minds do not operate in a “specialised” way. For them, brands have only one voice and a single purpose – regardless of whether they are advertised in a TV commercial or an event, or showcased via a social network.

Much has been said about convergence. Chief marketing officers are eager to see it happen, but why do they then insist in separating communications disciplines? Integration is not just gathering several agencies in a room and waiting for them to have a “big idea”, but a single line of thought born together with a business strategy. A unique voice.

This perception led us to create our agency, Ideal, with the belief that communication should not be defined simply by the tools an agency uses. The idea is that there is no such thing as “integrated communication” since, by applying this notion, we assume that we work with separated disciplines in a world where they are increasingly inseparable. The fact is that we don't believe in advertising or specialised agencies, but simply in brand agencies that are able to provide the solutions clients need while communicating with their public – in any format.

Reality check: there is a gap between what agencies have been offering clients and what clients actually need. Today, in communications, it is impossible to think that a sole solution will be enough to tackle each and every challenge a business faces.

Ask companies like Google, Nike, McDonald's, Diageo or General Electric what they're looking for. The answer will be more than increasing sales, having followers or appearing on the cover of a newspaper. The fact is they all need more than branding. They want to build a reputation.

How you do this doesn't matter. You can be giving out leaflets in the street or buying millions in advertising, using social media or pitching stories to journalists. What really matters is the image and perception of stakeholders regarding their brand and



Cesar (left) and Vieira... ‘there is a gap between what agencies have been offering clients and what their clients actually need’

how it will improve business results. And, to start this conversation, brands need a solid reputation.

We stand for a new understanding of how it will all work from now on.

## At a glance

**Founded** 2007

**Principals** Ricardo Cesar and Eduardo Vieira, co-founders

**Staff** 154

**Locations** São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** “Find your greatness” by Wieden & Kennedy Portland for Nike during the London Olympics. It featured everyday athletes competing in places around the world named London

## Learnt anything new lately?

Every day, non-stop. Lately, we've been discussing the idea that the storytelling skills that advertising agencies are looking for should be provided by a new kind of content producers: brand journalists

We divided our business into three major areas – influence, engagement and activation – covering the three types of media (earned, owned and paid) a company needs. This is something daring, especially in Latin America, because, in most agencies, everything is still separate. Creatives don't know how to brief, publicists don't understand how to buy ads, social media analysts are not able to write a press release. What if it all came together?

The key to accomplish that lies in gathering the right team: professionals who are able to wander through more than one field of the communication spectrum and think of it as a whole; people who aren't too attached to an orthodox thread of thought and who can design a strategy across all platforms.

Not only must a brand be well-known, a brand must be respected too – and agencies are the ones that can inspire it to achieve this goal. That's what we do. If branding is what a company says about itself and reputation is what other people say about a company, we are a reputation agency.

In the Brazilian market, with the

momentum coming from the build-up to the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games, brands have set their eyes on our country with the highest expectations. Agencies have to embrace this opportunity.

According to the latest *Consensus Ad Forecast*, released by Warc, advertising investment in Brazil will show the world's third-highest growth this year at 9.8 per cent (the US will have 2.2 per cent), and the forecast for 2014 is for us to be first. This is only in advertising. We are talking about a country where the corporate communication market has grown 300 per cent over the past ten years and 15 per cent annually during the past five years, according to the Brazilian Association of Corporate Communication.

The question is: how will brands take advantage of this momentum? Will they brief their agencies to take only one bite or eat the whole plate? And, more importantly, who is prepared to do so? It's time to think about hybrid communications.

*Ricardo Cesar and Eduardo Vieira are the co-founders of Ideal*



# Karmarama

The vision and values that people share are key to a company's success. If you don't want to be vanilla, learn to say no and be prepared to pay

Everyone knows that agencies have the most vibrant cultures in the business world. We work hard and play hard. We have beanbags and table football. We have legendary Christmas parties with a relaxed attitude towards health, safety and morality. Not like those squares at KPMG.

Well, apparently not.

Last year, Bruce Daisley at Twitter visited six London agencies and concluded that agency cultures were a bit "vanilla". There was a lot of talk about "our people", but very little that was differentiated.

I don't think that the six agencies he met were wrong. Our business is about people. Even Sir Martin Sorrell has gone on record to say that clients choose people, not agencies. And, however excited we get about intellectual property, unique operating models or trademarked planning approaches, again and again you'll hear clients singing the praises of people before product and process.

But agencies are missing an opportunity if they think the answer is simply hiring great staff. If it were that easy, the company with the biggest chequebook would always win. And the health of the independent sector is testament to the fact that David can beat Goliath.

The real answer is that, in a world where people increasingly value experience and opportunity over possessions, what actually binds people to business is culture.

Of course, salaries and perks are important but, wherever you look in business today, you'll see that it's the purpose and principles of a business that make us want to work there.

A trip to Silicon Valley last year brought this home as everyone we met, from Apple to Zynga, emphasised their mission and values over and above everything else they did.

In the part of the world where competition for talent is at its fiercest, it makes perfect sense. Developers want to get paid, but they also want a home that shares the way they would like to shape the world.

Small wonder that it took someone from Twitter to tell us to raise our game.

Now, somewhere in a bottom drawer, we all have a vision and values statement. But ask yourself two questions. Could every single one of your colleagues play it back to you? And does it tell you what not to do as well as what you should?

Because, as Bill Bernbach once said, a principle isn't a principle unless it costs you money.



*Billboul... 'If we focus on doing the right thing for our clients' business, then, ultimately, they will do right by us'*

So work out what you stand for and what it means you should say "no" to. And if some people don't like it, even better. Because if you don't want your culture to be vanilla, you have to draw a line.

There are hundreds of examples, but my current favourite is from the

retailer Zappos.com, which is obsessive about providing great customer experience. It knows the job isn't for everyone – it wants the kind of staff who send you flowers if you mention that you've just got engaged – so it offers faint-hearted joiners \$5,000 to leave at the end of the first week if they don't feel they can hack it.

It is a principle with a very real cost that gives a greater sense of culture than any vague "it's all about the people" statement.

At Karmarama, we're proud of our work and our thinking (we even have a secret planning triangle that Sid is trying to trademark), but we're under no illusion that it's our culture that has been our best weapon.

"Good works" is a values statement that everyone at Farringdon Road understands because it marries two simple principles: an ambitious focus on the very best work, with an ethical and decent approach to staff, clients and the community.

And it makes sense of our name: at Karmarama, we believe that what goes around comes around. If we focus on doing the right thing for our

clients' business, then, ultimately, they will do right by us.

And it costs us something. In this case, publicity: we don't enter creative awards because we believe they create a divide between the agendas of agencies and clients.

I could try to convince you why this is right, but it's important that some of you disagree. Because it's a filter that helps us select the right staff, clients and partners and it differentiates us from the rest of our industry.

And it works. In *The Sunday Times* Best Companies survey, 96 per cent of us agreed that Karmarama has inspiring values – the third-highest in the UK.

In a way, this is the great thing about being independent. We get to pick our fights and create cultures that are an authentic reflection of the founders and the colleagues who are attracted by them. So, draw a line, pick a fight and learn to say "no".

Because if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything.

*Ben Bilboul is the chief executive at Karmarama*

## At a glance

**Founded** 2000

**Principals** Dave Buonaguidi, chief creative officer; Nicola Mendelsohn, executive chairman; Ben Bilboul, chief executive; Sid McGrath, chief strategy officer; Mark Runacus, senior planning partner

**Staff** 200

**Location** London

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Red Bull Stratos for achieving the biggest live audience on YouTube ever

**Learnt anything new lately?**

Travelling far afield gives you an unrivalled perspective on your own backyard



# Kolle Rebbe

How to go from small independent agency to bespoke network servicing a blue-chip client across multiple markets in less than six months



Kolle, Rebbe and Winter-Buerke (l-r)... 'good international work is done by people who want to work together and not by people who are forced to work together'

**W**e have just completed the first year of one of the most exciting challenges this agency has faced in its history: to bring Lufthansa's "nonstop you" campaign to the streets of 44 countries around the world. And, at the same time, to prove that we can be better than a network.

When we won the account in December 2011, it stunned the world of advertising that Lufthansa had chosen a small independent, 300-person agency in Hamburg. Did we have other offices? None to be seen.

The first thing we needed to do was establish a functioning international network. We had five months in which to do it. Today, the campaign is running, and the network is in perfect functioning order. We often wonder how we managed it. Here's how. In seven simple rules, which provide something that resembles an answer.

## 1. Be a client

First, think about where you need to have locations in your network and give some thought as to which regions you can bundle. Then develop a profile of which sort of partner agencies you would ideally like. Then just be a client. Call a pitch, let the agencies present ideas and sieve the rest out. The fact that we managed to select 20 hot candidates from 400 potential partners was in great part due to the help of thenetworkone. It did the first step of the research. We then screened and filtered according to our specifications.

## 2. Buy a new suitcase

Let's face it. If you aren't part of a network agency, you're going to have to travel and build up your own private network. It's like looking for your own life partner rather than having

an arranged marriage. The latter is quicker, the former makes you happier. So, best buy a new suitcase. One that is good for travelling between two and five days. If you're based in Europe, it will need to be able to join you for a quick dash across to a neighbouring country, but should also be willing to travel to distant continents. (By the way, there actually is the perfect suitcase for this very purpose. Call us if you want to know which one it is.) The reason why you will be on the road for anywhere between two and five days is not only to do with the various distances you will be covering, but with rule three.

## 3. Meet people

Even though we are living in an era of Skype and FaceTime, you should still take time to meet every potential partner in person. And make time for it too. Just because somebody may appear proper and respectable in front of a webcam does not mean they

will be wearing the same face after their 11th beer of the evening (you decide which you prefer). Get to know your potential partners outside the conference room. Go for a walk, have a conversation about everything that's important to you, from family values to favourite pets. Your partners have to be on the same wavelength to make things run smoothly across a distance of 8,000km. For Lufthansa, we were on the road for four weeks and visited 20 agencies. After the pitch, ten were left. We visited them again. Along with the client and their right of veto. The fact that they didn't need to unpack that veto shows that rules 1 to 3 actually work.

## 4. Never confuse partners with handymen

The Lufthansa campaign lives not only off its look and feel but also off the mechanics of its headlines. You can't simply translate it from German into any other language. So our partners had to be able to create good work, write brilliant lines and be just as creative with images from pool shootings. Yesterday's German image for a city trip to Madrid could be an American image for European tours tomorrow. We didn't need side-kicks, we needed proper partners. Define precisely who you are looking for before you build up your network. And there's one more thing you also need to do.

## 5. Trust yourself

Even if the potential partner seems right at first, pay close attention to your instincts. If you even have so much as the slightest doubt that things might not work out, leave it be.

## 6. Trust your partner

It's rather unlikely that any creative in Tokyo will wake up in the morning

to translate a campaign from Hamburg straight into Japanese. Don't create any false expectations if you only need somebody to adapt your campaign. Be clear about what you want from the word go. However, once you have found your new partner, trust them and give them their freedom, within a defined framework. It's also rather unlikely that any creative in Tokyo will wake up in the morning to be lectured every day from Hamburg. Remember: an insulted creative at the other end of the world won't see much more incentive than to offer services according to plan. And your client will be the first one to notice.

## 7. Trust your client

Trust your client if they have the feeling something isn't quite working smoothly. You have taken the trouble to set up a bespoke agency network, especially for their purposes. One that fits perfectly in every detail and still remains sufficiently adjustable to accommodate changes. If it pinches anywhere, change it. Remember: good international work is done by people who want to work together and not by people who are forced to work together, as is the case in traditional networks. That's the best thing about the system we have. It is based on voluntary participation. And it isn't rigid. That's something you should take full advantage of.

## 7.5. There's no blueprint

The shortest rule of all. A bespoke suit needs more time and expertise than merchandise off the shelf. But it looks much better too.

### At a glance

**Founded** 1994

**Principals** Stefan Kolle, founder and managing director, creativity; Stephan F Rebbe, founder and managing director, consulting; Andreas Winter-Buerke, managing director, consulting; Ralph Poser, managing director, planning; Stefan Wübbe, managing director, creativity

**Staff** 280

**Location** Hamburg

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Red Bull Stratos

**Learnt anything new lately?** The Coca-Cola Content 2020 initiative put innovative content marketing strategy in a nutshell

*Stefan Kolle, Stephan F Rebbe and Andreas Winter-Buerke are managing directors at Kolle Rebbe*



# SapientNitro Europe

As the digital revolution transforms the way we tell stories, 'storyscaping' is the new storytelling – it's all about the comma, not the full stop

There was a time in history when families and friends would gather around the warm glow of a fire to listen to stories. Fast forward a few thousand years and, in our own lifetimes, tribes of people have gathered around a different kind of warm glow to listen to stories – the warm glow of their TV sets.

This phenomenon enabled people in their millions to soak up the entertainment of choice and, in between, listen to brand stories told in 30 seconds. An entire industry exploded around this highly specialised art form of telling a brand's story in 30 seconds, which, in turn, ignited the successful businesses of media agencies and research companies.

Not surprisingly, the success of these businesses attracted businessmen, who set up holding companies with the purpose of maximising the combined profit from all the individual pieces of the pie that made up the advertising industry.

And then the needle jumped. Digital happened. All of a sudden, we could play something called Pong on our TV sets; we could "time-shift" content; skip the ads, press a red button for more info; take our favourite content with us on a mobile device; write, film or photograph our own chapters and add them to the story; share our opinions; rate things online for all to see. We could even find out whether the "story" was merely that, or if it had substance. And all this happened, the whole 0-60 of the digital age, in just a handful of years. It's as if we blinked and dozens of different planets collided, scattering tribes all over an entirely new landscape.

Thanks to "digital", today we are living in a different world. Tablet sales are through the roof and "couch commerce" ain't far behind. Mobile connections to the net rival desktop and around 30 per cent of Brits did Christmas shopping online this year. This is an anthropological shift unlike any before and we're in the thick of it. We experience brands as much through the hours we spend online at home, on our desktops at work, via mobiles on our way to wherever's next, and even in retail spaces. It's all connected and it's always on.

So, where does that leave the art of telling a brand's story in 30 seconds? It seems to have been reduced to story-yelling – relentlessly pushing out the same one-way 30-second message from as many angles as there are channels, as if nothing had changed.

Meanwhile, born in that moment when the world blinked and everything became digital, SapientNitro is



Poynton (left) and Vaz... 'the comma opens up new pathways to create ongoing brand journeys'

## At a glance

**Founded** 1998

**Principals** Nigel Vaz, senior vice-president and managing director, Europe; Malcolm Poynton, chief creative officer, Europe

**Staff** 1,474 across Europe; 7,000-plus globally

**Locations** 31 offices around the globe including Cologne, Delhi, London, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Miami, Milan, Moscow, Munich, New York, San Francisco, São Paulo, Shanghai, Stockholm, Sydney, Toronto and Zurich

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Curators of Sweden, in which a different Swede is given control of a VisitSweden Twitter feed each week

## Learnt anything new lately?

More and more clients are seeing the need to move beyond the traditional above-the-line world, where every ad ends with a full stop, and are instead seeking agencies able to use a comma, continuing the story across an always-on, omnichannel world

of a new breed. SapientNitro is an "agency", sure, just not as you know it. It's one with a deep understanding of the entire landscape across which consumers run free today with their connected devices and how they interact in each moment. We begin in a different place and so our clients' stories find themselves connecting in different ways, at different times and in different spaces too.

We call our unique approach "storyscaping". At its heart sits a central thought that organises how a brand's story plays out in the moments most relevant to today's consumer.

From this organising idea, we literally construct a brand's story across the emotional, virtual and physical landscape so people can dip in and out, jump on and off, add to, share and draw from as they wish. In a storyscape, the full stop is a dead end, while the comma opens up new pathways to create ongoing brand journeys.

The challenge brands face today is that, if they truly wish to engage with consumers, adjusting the aerial or ratcheting up the volume just won't cut it. Today's consumer landscape requires a fundamental shift in how brands share their stories. It's about

ensuring a brand can land sparks wherever consumers are, whenever they are there – illuminating, engaging and enabling them to enjoy the story. By building on the foundations of storytelling to create an appealing experience for consumers, storyscaping allows businesses and brands to take the resources they have and focus their energy on creating a truly connected consumer experience.

This is not a subtle shift beyond last century's business of ending a brand's latest story with a full stop. The shift to a comma is a world apart; one where the old-world order presided over by holding companies and broadcast media deals looks increasingly antiquated and out of step with consumers. In contrast, today's independent agencies, operating without corporate or delineated boundaries, are freely blazing trails across this new territory to redefine how brands connect with consumers in this hyper-connected, always-on world. Welcome to the age of storyscaping.

*Malcolm Poynton is the chief creative officer and Nigel Vaz is the senior vice-president and managing director of SapientNitro Europe*



# The Hallway

In an era of specialism, the ambition and agility independents possess can offer clients more effective solutions than network agencies

**W**e're predicting this decade will herald a new era of specialism and it will be led by the ambitious, visionary independents that are more nimble and can offer clients the most effective and efficient solution – the benefits of specialisation without the headache of multiple agencies with competing agendas and silos.

Sir Martin Sorrell recently said: "Clients are looking for efficiencies rather than effectiveness so, in tough economic conditions in slow-growth markets, it is very difficult, and smaller-sized agencies are finding it more difficult. There is a natural consolidation of share among the bigger agencies in tough conditions."

On the contrary, we often hear from clients that have chosen to leave networked agency groups to work with independents like us of the frustration of being constantly sold into the other companies in the holding group. They don't see this as an "efficiency", they see it as the agency group trying to line its pockets at the expense of the client.

There's a difference between independents and networked agencies – the founders don't lead the networks. It is the founders, the ambitious pioneers, who build businesses. The third-, fourth-, fifth-generation managers of networked agencies are in a different position. They have everything to lose and a lot less to gain. That creates a different commercial attitude: defensiveness at the expense of entrepreneurialism.

The leaders of independents are more ambitious, more hungry and more visionary. They are also more agile so, when they see opportunities, they can act on them quickly. The first benefactors of that attitude are their clients. They get more ambitious thinking. In tough times, that's the attitude that delivers the best results. It is effective and, because the independents operate without the holding group overheads, it is more efficient.

The dictionary defines "independent" as "not subject to control by others", but we think there's more to it than that. Sure, being independent is about running your own race but, to us, what's more important is the kind of race you run. The truth is that there are plenty of agencies that are "not subject to control by others", but which do nothing different to those that are: give clients what they ask for, keep the money coming in, keep their burned-out staff sozzled on free agency booze, win more business, pick up the odd award and so on.



Lee (top) and Hall... 'there is no doubt that the best work is created when you get different disciplines working together'

We're striving to be different, to build a better type of agency. One that is nimble, courageous and determined to be better: better for our staff, better for our clients, better all round. This means constantly questioning, daring to do what our instinct tells us is right, regardless of how different to the norm that may be. And putting our money where our

mouth is, with no-one to bail us out if we get it wrong.

Agencies today may not offer the same predetermined advertising solutions as the Mad Men of the 60s, but that's a good thing. The collaborative, multichannel approach that agencies can now provide clients far outweighs one-dimensional creative delivered in predictable formats and channels. However, the networked agencies, born during a decade of acquisition and consolidation, have skewed their focus away from courageous creativity and doing things differently. They are more focused on earnings. We believe, as pioneering independents, that we have an obligation to demonstrate how every channel and tactic may be used to advance our clients' businesses.

Independents are built on freedom and flexibility. This ensures our businesses are dynamic and efficient and able to evolve quickly. We believe all agencies need to adapt in this new era of specialisation, so we're redefining what an agency should be and shaping a new type of team – a team that unites all channel specialists under one roof, working together to help

solve our clients' problems. One Team. We are doing this because there is no doubt that the best work is created when you get different disciplines working together, combining their own unique perspectives. When those disciplines are all on the one team, we find it is a lot more effective and a lot more efficient for clients.

One Team encourages breaking down the silos and fostering a culture of collaboration, without the concern of competing agendas. This collaboration promotes agility and results in more opportunities for everyone to contribute, iterate and come up with different ideas – ultimately, creating better, more effective work for our clients.

One Team is a lean, motivated mix of strategists, creatives, technologists and project managers from multichannel backgrounds across brand, advertising, direct, digital, entertainment and PR, and we're all working towards the same goal: creating the best solution for our clients.

*Simon Lee is the creative partner and Jules Hall is the managing partner at The Hallway*

## At a glance

**Founded** 2007

**Principals** Jules Hall, managing partner; Simon Lee, creative partner

**Staff** 36

**Location** Sydney

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Curators of Sweden. The Swedish Institute and VisitSweden gave control of a Twitter feed to a different Swede every week to share everyday life and opinions

## Learnt anything new lately?

It's amazing how much other people know



# The Jupiter Drawing Room

The 'interdependence of things' requires a new application of innovative thinking, and this is where independent agencies have an advantage

**T**here are a lot of agencies whining at the moment: "Clients don't pay us enough; clients are becoming more and more demanding; clients want more for less."

Most clients will lose not one minute's sleep, of course. You think it's tough being an agency right now, try being a brand owner.

But, instead of lamenting, it is more constructive to recognise that this period of profound change can herald a new, mutually beneficial, beginning for both agencies and clients alike.

It begins with identifying the role agencies should be playing in response to the manifold challenges coming at companies and brand owners from all sides.

These include, but, as they say, "are not limited to": the challenge of technology and how it is influencing where, how and when consumers choose to interact with brands; the growing importance of a company dovetailing what it says with what it does; its focus on its purpose, not simply its products; its stance on sustainability and social responsibility; the need for conversations with (not just communications to) consumers; and the challenges of integration.

Agencies need to be clear (internally, and to their clients) about what it is they get out of bed for each morning. What makes them indispensable to clients?

For the most successful agencies, the *raison d'être* is the provision of "creativity" (along with "love", probably the most misinterpreted word in the English language).

In the marketing and communication industry, at its best, creativity signifies the art and science of creating big, compelling, distinctive ideas for brands, to build loyal communities and to make cash registers ring.

The "ideas" space is where smart agencies will continue to operate, but they need to evolve from having a section of the agency dubbed "the creative department" to ensuring that the whole organisation functions as an innovation hub. Its goal should be to apply the notion of creativity and innovation way beyond the next advertising campaign.

This innovative thinking skillset, deployed correctly, is potentially far more valuable to a client than its simple application to an advertising brief. Bringing minds to the table that are trained to think openly, freely and out of the box can be a potent resource for corporate progress.

As Warren Berger noted in his excellent book *Glimmer*, companies



Warsop... 'deep diving, not snorkelling, is the order of the day'

## At a glance

**Founded** 1989

**Principals** Graham Warsop, founder and creative chairman; Kevan Aspoas, chief executive, The Jupiter Drawing Room (Cape Town); Jerry Mpufane, chief executive, The Jupiter Drawing Room (Johannesburg); Denford Magora, chief executive, The Jupiter Drawing Room (Zimbabwe) & Partners

**Staff** 273

**Locations** Cape Town, Johannesburg, Harare

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Why digital, pray tell? Why not integrated?

**Learnt anything new lately?** *Turritopsis nutricula*, a deep water jellyfish, can revert to the polyp stage, deeming it biologically immortal

cess. Innovation is not simply in the product offering, but also in the way businesses communicate – internally and externally, how they identify, engage, converse with and inspire their consumer communities.

Senior executives in organisations are becoming more attuned to the value of innovative thinking and its role in shaping the destinies of their companies as well as their brands.

Agencies, if they wish to move more centre-stage, need to be critically focused on the need to deep dive, rather than snorkel on the surface of a client's business. Successful innovation is partly inspiration, mostly investigation. The Jupiter Drawing Room's motto, *rem tene, verba sequuntur* (grasp the subject and the words will follow), is even more relevant today than it was when the agency opened its doors two decades ago.

But deep diving doesn't happen in an ivory tower, surrounded by white paper or a blank screen. What feeds innovation is insight, research and a deep interest in, and understanding of, people as well as products. That's the coal that fires up the locomotive, the thermal current that lifts the bird.

But in order to maximise the effectiveness of the agency's innovative thinking, clients need to consider the barriers unwittingly placed in the way of its application. This demands a rethink in terms of how disciplines and departments are integrated. Today, compartmentalisation, so convenient for so long, is feeling decidedly archaic.

Responsibilities such as corporate values, purpose, reputation, insights, brand identity, internal and external communications, user experience and social responsibility can no longer be the remit of different silos. They need to be approached holistically – with clients willing to do so, and agencies geared to do so, often aligned with strong collaborative partners.

The new "interdependence of things" provides a new opportunity for innovative thinking, embracing every aspect of the brand's manifestation. A way forward that truly recognises that technology is reinventing the way people think, source, engage, connect and react.

Entrepreneurial and fleet of foot, the top independent agencies are ideally poised to drive this change.

Imagination and innovative thinking are the tools of our trade.

In the right hands, what powerful tools they are.

*Graham Warsop is the founder and creative chairman of The Jupiter Drawing Room*

such as Procter & Gamble discovered the difference that can be made when embracing creativity at the core of the organisation. When the former P&G chairman AG Lafley began his reign, he consciously challenged a conservative culture by creating more open ways of working, with design and innovative thinking injected into the DNA of the company. This heralded a number of breakthroughs, including new products such as the ingenious Swiffer mop, Febreze and Swash (for people who wanted to clean their clothes without washing them).

Some prodigiously successful companies, such as Apple, recognised this many moons ago. Steve Jobs would meet with the brightest creative minds from his agency every week to discuss and explore creative matters that went beyond the traditional remit of an advertising agency.

It's uncontested that innovation is a vital component of corporate suc-



# The Secret Little Agency

Traditional marketing methods need to be revised if brands are to prosper in an Asia that is unifying and becoming increasingly sophisticated

**W**e began to worry in 2012. Here at TSLA, we hit an all-time low in terms of the percentage of briefs that originated in Singapore. The figure was just 38 per cent. And with the whopping majority of work coming to the agency from brands across much of South-East Asia and China, we began to be concerned by whether we were losing our footprint in our country of origin – Singapore – or if we were simply exchanging it for our more “natural” footprint in Asia.

We say natural because we haven’t, as a business, focused specifically on trying to be in each Asian country. Natural also because we tend to be particularly reactive, rather than proactive, when it comes to chasing down business – especially in Singapore. Yet we are baffled, confused, surprised and encouraged by the interest coming from as far away as Auckland and from as near as Vietnam. Maybe Asia is not as fragmented as we thought it was, after all?

## Unifying Asia

In many parts of Asia, unification has already happened. If a forthcoming Association of Southeast Asian Nations free trade agreement is allowed to pass, telecommunications roaming surcharges for both talk-time and data could be a thing of the past across South-East Asia. Essentially, that will make every call a local call. That is literally regional communication becoming “national”. Yes, there remain the nuanced differences in language and legislation but, creatively, it is possible to create campaigns that reconcile and appease the common divides of relevance, humour and culture in general.

Remember our friends in Thailand? It’s not as though we ever understood what they were saying, but we still viewed their ads more than 21 million times between 2010 and 2012 and laughed until we cried.

Just to be clear, we’re not encouraging a cookie-cutter approach here. Just the opposite, actually – we believe more work, more time and more effort needs to be applied if we are to roll out campaigns that are super-relevant to all of Asia. We need a new way of thinking that creates content and campaigns that are easily identifiable and understood by a new unified Asian psychographic.

In our daily grind of putting together briefs and developing strategy, we are constantly reviewing regional marketing data – both qualitative and quantitative – from across the region. The patterns are uncannily similar



*Ye... ‘it is our professional belief that the majority of the Asia-Pacific region is not just developed, but actually quite advanced’*

## At a glance

**Founded** 2007

**Principals** Nicholas Ye, chief executive; Eunice Tan, partner, strategy and development; Mavis Neo, partner, technology and innovation; Kris Kam, managing partner; Hanyi Lee, group creative officer

**Staff** 28

**Locations** Singapore, Shanghai, Hong Kong

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Chipotle’s gold Cannes Lion-winning “back to the start” by Creative Artists Agency, Los Angeles

**Learnt anything new lately?** That we need to remain as small as possible to attract, retain and afford the very best talent

across gender, age, income and educational levels right across Asia-Pacific, to such an extent that we are now in the throes of putting together a paper to map these similarities and what they mean for global marketers wanting to do business in Asia.

Until now, it seems that, in Asia, we have been quick to point out the differences but slow – almost reluctant – to really understand where the similarities lie and how we can lever-

age our knowledge of them to create what Asia would define as great, effective work.

## Advancing Asia

When asked at Cannes last year about the state of the advertising and marketing industry in China, the creative director of a certain top-ranking agency responded thus: “Oh, it’s coming along, but we have a long way to go. China is still very undeveloped, compared with...”

We remain careful and cautious of calling a market – any market, whether in Asia or abroad – “developing” or “undeveloped”. Perhaps this definition might be useful to the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank but, as defined by a marketer, it is our professional belief that the majority of the Asia-Pacific region is not just developed, but actually quite advanced.

We believe that Asian clients reflect the demands of the market, and many of those demands reflect the vast advancements that Asia has made in the past five years. Traditional Western constructs of marketing, models, roles and scopes are simply outdated or irrelevant when applied in Asia. If anything, many of these models act as benchmarks upon which to improve.

For example, take international standards in focus group moderation. We sat in on an Indonesian focus

group this afternoon and were briefed on the methodology for the group. Seeing that this was a focus group conducted in Asia for an Asian brand, the research company told us that traditional moderation was insufficient to obtain truly genuine answers. It had, therefore, appended a sheet of added methods employed specifically for Asian respondents that take into account the broad characteristics of the Asian sample audience, including eye contact, body language and volume.

Looking at this sheet, I couldn’t help but wonder if this would really apply only to the Asian sample, or whether it could work just as well for the rest of the world and if, in fact, I was holding in my hands a new and advanced proprietary research method that could uncover better responses from focus groups in general.

Research is just the tip of the iceberg in realising the potential of a unified, developed Asia.

## Communicating Asia

Our firm belief is that the real Asia of today is robust, advanced, progressive and unified.

We just need to get better at communicating all of this to our friends around the world.

*Nicholas Ye is the chief executive of The Secret Little Agency*



# WE Marketing Group

Chinese consumers are sophisticated and they expect instant feedback. Brands should follow the four Rs in marketing to serve this market

**C**hina's economic transformation can be summarised in one word: remarkable. I am very lucky to be part of this transformation, experiencing an era of unprecedented growth. Key learning: don't underestimate Chinese consumers. They are not catching up with you; you need to catch up with them.

China is a market you cannot afford to miss. It ranks second in global luxury spending (\$46 billion) and second in passenger car sales (11.8 million units, which is bigger than all of Western Europe).

Chinese consumers are increasingly demanding and sophisticated, particularly when it comes to new media. As of December 2012, China has 564 million internet users, 420 million mobile internet users and 309 million social media (*weibo*) users – the biggest number in the world. They are the most engaged social media users, creating the most original content. They love to share, express themselves, seek information, buy and play on the internet. On 11 November 2012 – Singles' Day – total sales on TMall.com reached \$3 billion: the highest e-commerce volume in the world in a single day.

China's social media is evolving quickly with its own characteristics. As Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are all blocked in China, it is important to understand how to effectively use the wide range of popular Chinese social media platforms, such as Sina Weibo, WeChat, Tudou, Youku, Meilishuo, Douban and many more.

Chinese consumers are mostly mobile, always-on, very viral and expect instant feedback. Bad news can spread very quickly and brands can be damaged overnight if they don't react well. Reliance on traditional marketing research and tracking studies on brand health is no longer an adequate response to these dynamic changes.

So, what can marketers do to catch up with consumers in this new world? Measure your brand performance in the following areas, which I summarise as "the four Rs in marketing".

## Relevance

No matter how successful your brand is globally, simply adapting a global model may not work in China. Take Campbell's. This 140-year-old iconic brand is a staple in Western households. But, in China, how do you sell an unknown brand of Western canned soup to consumers who take pride in preparing homemade soup?

At first, Campbell's studied Chinese tastes and developed new recipes for the local market. However,



Chan... 'Reliance on traditional marketing research and tracking studies on brand health is no longer an adequate response'

sales did not take off. The new management team decided mere adaptation will not work and reassessed its business fundamentals. It changed focus from the home market to convenience stores. It targeted young

white-collars who are on the go, receptive to new products and don't mind paying more to enjoy hot soup when buying lunch. Initial test results were encouraging: sales increased fourfold in the first month.

Campbell's also shifted most of its advertising budget to social media, promoting itself as a lifestyle brand. As Campbell's digital agency, WE developed interesting content, recruited key opinion leaders and generated high engagement for the brand. Campbell's also expanded its business base to include the food service industry and worked with Chinese chefs to develop new products tailored to Chinese consumers.

With a limited budget in a crowded market, Campbell's aimed at the right target, the right channel, respected local culture and enhanced brand differentiation and relevance.

## Responsiveness

Brand marketing is no longer a one-way street. When consumers post a complaint or a question, they expect a quick response. Posting original content is not enough. You must respond, engage and actively listen to identify hot topics and opportunities. When we worked on a car-rental client, we even offered a free trial to a customer who complained about the service of our competitor.

## At a glance

### Founded 2005

**Principals** Viveca Chan, chairman and chief executive; Sam Chung, chief creative officer; Kenny Wong, managing director, Shanghai; Josh Li, managing director, Beijing; Keith Chan, managing director, Hong Kong

### Staff 200

**Locations** Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Nanjing, Shanghai

**Favourite digital campaign of 2012** Johnson & Johnson "seven square-metres of motherly love" to help working mothers lobby for private areas to pump milk

**Learnt anything new lately?** When social and mobile are no longer new media, integration is a must. 360-degree integration requires new skills and mindsets from top down, including management, planning, account and creative staff who can break down silos and think through the line

## Resonance

It's not just what you say, it's what *they* say. Traditional advertising only measures one layer of reach. We must measure multiple levels of conversation generated by friends of friends. This exponential reach and word of mouth give higher credibility than brands' own claims. What creates resonance? Content consumers are interested in, that is interesting and that offers an incentive to share.

## Resilience

You can't avoid bad news, but you can defend it. Often, your staff are your best ambassadors. For Cisco China, we developed a social ambassador programme. We recruited, trained, coached and incentivised more than 400 Cisco staff to post and retweet relevant Cisco content on their personal microblogs. This is particularly effective for business-to-business companies that seek quality of communication, not quantity. The programme can be extended to key opinion leaders and business associates. In today's fast-changing world, it is important to build your social army of advocates and defenders.

If your brand is not paying attention to these four Rs, think again.

*Viveca Chan is the chairman and chief executive of WE Marketing Group*



now see the work.

creative work and case histories from the agencies  
in this publication can be seen at:

[www.leadingindependents.com](http://www.leadingindependents.com)

as there is not space for everyone every year, we'd like to acknowledge the  
agencies that have featured in previous editions:

180 Amsterdam, Alametifarika, Amsterdam Worldwide, 180China, Belgiovane Williams Mackay,  
Big Spaceship, BSUR, Creature, Change Integrated, Creativeland Asia, Demner, Merlicek & Bergmann,  
DMG, Dommo, Duval Guillaume, Engine Group, Fischer + Fala!, Forsman & Bodenfors, Grupo W,  
IQ marketing, Law & Kenneth, Lorenzo Marini Associati, Modernista!, MUH·TAY·ZIK | HOF·FER,  
North Kingdom, Nostrum, Perfect Fools, Prime, Project Worldwide, Projector, Serviceplan,  
StrawberryFrog, Taxi, Tugboat, VCCP, Venables Bell, Walker







**thenetworkkone management ltd**

**The Loft  
19a Floral Street  
Covent Garden  
London  
WC2E 9DS**

**Tel: +44 (0)20 7240 7117**

**Fax: +44 (0)20 7681 1102**

**[www.thenetworkkone.com](http://www.thenetworkkone.com)**

**[www.leadingindependents.com](http://www.leadingindependents.com)**

**[www.facebook.com/thenetworkkone](https://www.facebook.com/thenetworkkone)**

**@thenetworkkone**

**Email: [julian.boulding@thenetworkkone.com](mailto:julian.boulding@thenetworkkone.com)  
or [paul.squirrell@thenetworkkone.com](mailto:paul.squirrell@thenetworkkone.com)**