

OMMA



**AGENCY
OF THE
YEAR**

2012'S STAR TURNS



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OMMA

WINTER 2012 - 2013



Their Big Break

Choosing *OMMA* Agency of the Year Winners

While choosing *OMMA* Agency of the Year winners is never easy, making the final cuts this year had us on the edge of our seats. In part, we can blame that on the way the interdisciplinary lines in digital marketing continue to fade away. Almost every agency we considered in one category could also have been a candidate in every other category, whether in social, mobile, design or creative; every one of them could make an argument for all-around greatness.

But in part, it's because we're star struck. We've come — and I mean all of us, not just us industry trolls but consumers as well — to expect something spectacular. The days when an agency's impact could be measured primarily by its rise in billings or the number of

creative awards it won, of course, are long gone. We now expect digital performances that bring us to our feet, and draw standing ovations.

In theory, we judge agencies by three (admittedly subjective) criteria: We're looking for companies that stood out from the crowd because of their strategic vision, innovation and industry leadership.

But as we dissected each of those, we realized that this year, star power often came down to truly creative casting and unexpected mashups. Was it the ability to seize a real-life event, take it into an ad agency "newsroom," and transform it into a branding moment, as Digitas, (our Gold Agency of the Year winner, page 8) did for Tide? Or the ever-more-clever mediahub/Mullen (which took the prize for Media Planning and

Buying, p. 38) reimagining JetBlue as a game show, or offering fans an Armageddon wardrobe and menu, to support *Doomsday Preppers*?

Some of our awardees had ideas that are vast and life-saving, as in Digitaria's (winner of our award for design, p. 45) creation of *KONY 2012*, the most viral video in history. But some ideas are just small and perfect, like PHD's (our choice for Mobile, p. 27) use of geo-targeting to steer supermarket shoppers to the Tums aisle.

In short, we tried to select agencies devoted to bringing down the house, finding new ways to connect brands with audiences, and audiences with each other. "Every great idea is social by nature," P.J. Pereira, cofounder of Pereira & O'Dell, our winner for social agency, tells reporter David Gianatasio. "If it's not social, it's not great. If the work we do is not worth sharing, it's not worth doing."

Of course, this pursuit of greatness has produced more than its share of stinkers, too, and our Larry Dobrow doesn't hold back in "Ten Worst Videos of 2012." (See p. 58)

We'd love to hear what you think of our winners. Email us at sarah@mediapost.com.

Celebrate the Best Agencies of 2012

Join us Tuesday Jan. 29 to toast the year's star performers at the Yale Club. Register here for tickets: www.mediapost.com/ommaagencyoftheyear/register

Sarah Mahoney
SARAH MAHONEY, EDITOR



MEDIAPOST'S

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AGENCY OF THE YEAR 2012
FEATURING DIGITAS
& AKQA



had a look at various dealers and it was obvious it was going to be very expensive. John says, 'So I wondered if I could actually make one. I discovered that the Welsh School of Instrument

mark as a pianist and composer. Meanwhile, John Watkins-Jones has done his elder son proud. With it, Huw won the string final of the *BBC Young Musician of the Year*

violins and violas, he had a crack at his first cello.' Paul, now 28, adds 'It turned out really well. He made me another one a bit later, when he'd got the hang of it. And that's the one I used



Whole families of musicians are not exactly rare. However, it is unusual to come across one that includes not only writers and performers of music, but also a management maker. With Watkins-Jones as a schoolteacher, John and his wife, Jane, had to get their ten-year-old son, Huw, into a cello suit. 'I'd like to say that I had it well before he was born,' says John. 'So I discovered that the Welsh School of Instrumental Music was not only a school, but also a place for evening classes once a week for

that my brother play the violin too, but I would have none of it.' 'My parents were both supportive and relaxed,' Huw says. 'I don't think I was ever responded very well to being pushed, rather than feeling threatened by success. I found that when I was 11. Now I'm 28, I'm still playing his father's instrument, until last year. Now, however, he has acquired a cello. He's not said anything about the chance to run a bow across the strings of

After probably three or four goes with violins and violas, he had a crack at his first cello.' Paul, now 28, adds 'It turned out really well. He made me another one a bit later, when he'd got the hang of it. And that's the one I used. John has since become a full-time musician, playing a dozen violins a week. He's a real American. He's on the cake' says Paul and his younger brother, Huw, who has been playing from an early age. 'I was big enough to climb up and using the keys, that's what I did,' Paul remembers. But it wasn't long before the family folks were really quite keen for me to take up the violin, because Dad, who played the viola, used to play chamber music with his mates and they

Newsies

With its newsroom approach to real-time brand storytelling, Digitas continues to create campaigns with Page-One punch **by Joe Mandese**



On Monday, Feb. 27th, when a race car veered off course and crashed into an industrial dryer spilling a couple of hundred gallons of highly flammable jet fuel onto the Daytona International Speedway, it appeared that the 2012 Daytona 500 might be over with 40 laps left to go. But the track crew quickly extinguished the flames, and then a remarkable marketing opportunity occurred: They began pouring boxes of Tide powered detergent on the hazardous spill, demonstrating in a visceral, real-time, real-world situation – before thousands of attendees and millions of tv viewers – that the Procter & Gamble brand isn't just good at cleaning clothes, but also is the preferred brand of hazmat cleanup crews.



While that kind of product testimonial cannot be planned, it can be amplified if you have the right team in place to capitalize on the news cycle surrounding the event. As it turns out, P&G did, and as spectators at home watched their TV sets agape, a handful of executives sitting in a small control room in Digitas' Boston headquarters watched along with them. In addition to the live TV feed, they also were watching screens showing a wide range of meta data surrounding the event, including live social media feeds and analytics they could use to monitor the story as it trended. Almost immediately, they began creating and distributing content on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube that would amplify it.

As it turned out, the team, headed by Digitas Senior Vice

President John Robinson, a former journalist turned agency creative, was already primed for action, coming off a similar real-time storytelling opportunity for Tide the previous day. As one of the sponsors of ABC's telecast of the Academy Awards, the Digitas crew helped craft real-time messages and stories congratulating and playing off of some of the Oscar winners as they were revealed live.

Days later, when extraordinarily violent storms and tornadoes ripped through America's heartland, the Digitas team were also poised to capitalize on the real-time storytelling opportunity created when P&G sent its "Tide Loads of Hope" mobile laundry facilities to help devastated communities in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio clean-up from the natural disasters.

BRINGING JOURNALISM TO BRANDING

The team was in place thanks to "BrandLIVE," an experimental new content lab created by Digitas to see if it could begin to leverage the storytelling opportunities inherent in journalistic news and social media trending story cycles on behalf of a brand. The program was so successful, that P&G has since expanded the program to two of its other brands. And several other, as-yet-undisclosed Digitas clients are also now working with it.

While most big agencies are still trying to develop successful business models to capitalize on the shift toward real-time brand storytelling, the Digitas team turned to a model that has already been doing it successfully — more or less — for centuries: news organiza-



For P&G, a little self-mocking has gone a long way; left, Digitas' BrandLIVE, part agency model and part technology suite, is led by SVPs John Robinson and Anne-Marie Kline

THE BEST INDICATION THAT THE PARODY WORKED WAS A TWEET FROM THE ONION'S MANAGING EDITOR KYLE RYAN: "WELL PLAYED, TIDE, WELL PLAYED."

tions. But unlike some agency executives who now assert that "brands are journalists too," Digitas' Robinson says the goal isn't to try and pass a brand, or its pitches, off as authentic journalistic news stories, but rather to use journalistic methods — especially the ability to contextualize how a story will play the next day — that editors and news producers do so well.

In fact, in preparation for BrandLIVE, Robinson and his team set up camp inside *USA Today's* newsroom and sat in as flies-on-the-wall of the newspaper's story meetings, to learn first-hand how top journalists shape the way stories are played. And

then he built a "newsroom" to replicate it. And each morning the BrandLIVE team begins its day the way many newspapers do, with a meeting in which stories are pitched for the next day's edition. Instead of journalists, the meetings consist of Digitas social media analytics and content creators, their clients' brand managers, and if need be, their legal teams too.

As it turns out, real-time brand storytelling isn't without its risks, and the BrandLIVE team hasn't been afraid to take some when they believed there was a payoff for the brand. That's what happened when satirical newspaper *The Onion*

published a fictitious column penned by "Fred Hammond," the hypothetical "director of digital video and social media ad integration for Tide Detergent," which more or less made fun of the kind of real-time storytelling P&G was striving to achieve with BrandLIVE.

The Onion column, titled, "Hey, Everybody! This Cool New Tide Detergent Video Is Blowing Up All Over The Internet!," lampooned so-called "viral" brand videos, by describing Tide's as having "these cute, funny talking animals, a cool indie rock song, and kit's just so hilariously random," etc.

In response, the BrandLIVE team did the

DIGITAS: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

CEO, North America COLIN KINSELLA
Chief Creative Officer, North America LINCOLN BJORKMAN
Regional President TONY WEISMAN
Regional President JOANNE ZAIAC
Cast size 3,000

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients AMERICAN EXPRESS, GENERAL MOTORS,
MILLERCOORS, SPRINT, TACO BELL

BOX OFFICE

OMMA estimates 2012 billings of \$2.8B, with revenues of \$405M

CRITICAL REVIEWS

Digitas continues to lead in creative, branded content, analytics, R&D, and of course, new business

only logical thing — it created a parody of *The Onion* parody featuring many of the cliché elements described by *The Onion*, albeit tongue-in-cheek. The problem, says Digitas' Robinson, is that after the agency uploaded it to YouTube and posted it on Facebook it realized that many of the Tide detergent fan base simply did not have enough of the backstory to understand where it was coming from, because they hadn't read the original *Onion* column.

In other words, it was an inside joke that fell flat with some of the brand's fans, because they weren't on the inside of it. So the BrandLIVE team scrambled to utilize social media to fill in the gaps to provide context for the story behind the story. The best indication that it worked was a tweet from *The Onion's* Managing Editor Kyle Ryan: "Well played, Tide, well played."

says Digitas CEO Colin Kinsella. "A lot of agencies talk about doing something like this, but to actually be able to build the product, and the processes and methods and execute on them, takes a lot."

And it is because of this fresh, yet highly disciplined and scientific approach to real-time brand storytelling that the editors of *OMMA* magazine pick Digitas as its agency of the year — for the third year in a row — not simply for cracking the code on content marketing, but for creating a business model that makes it work.

Kinsella predicts other agencies will follow with similar "brand newsroom" approaches, because it works. He can't say how well it does, because P&G has asked the agency to keep it confidential, but he says, "on an ROI basis, it is proving to be its most effective marketing channel."

While Digitas won't say, Cincinnati-based media shop

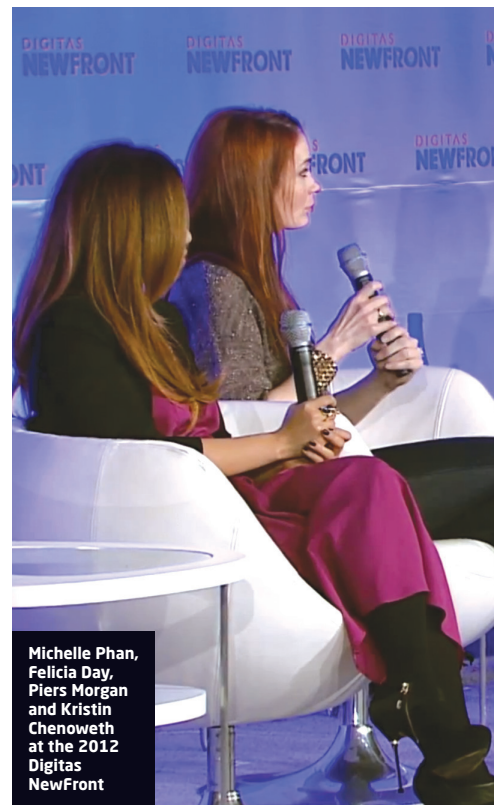
TAKING RISKS IN THE BRAND NEWSROOM

As much fun as the P&G and Digitas teams seem to be having with BrandLIVE, it's not all fun and games, according to the agency's chief. "It's a process and a method, but there's also a lot of technology that we've put in

place to do it,"

Empower MediaMarketing did an ROI analysis in the days following the Daytona 500 incident, which estimated that BrandLIVE generated more than \$8 million worth of free, positive media impressions for the Tide brand. What the long-term return was on Tide's brand reputation and esteem may be incalculable.

Kinsella says BrandLIVE is still evolving, but it's already had a profound impact on Digitas' clients, and on the agency itself. He says it began as a way to "fill in" gaps between client campaigns, but that the model is beginning to flip, and that the BrandLIVE approach is starting to become the "de facto place for marketing communications," and that the traditional



Michelle Phan, Felicia Day, Piers Morgan and Kristin Chenoweth at the 2012 Digitas NewFront

"paid media" (ie. advertising campaigns) agencies utilize will simply become a means for "accelerating" those stories.

"It began by filling in gaps. But it is becoming the way brands market," he asserts. "And it's not just affecting brands. It will change the agency too. This new, more agile way of working will become the new business model for us going forward."

NEW BUSINESS: UP 40 PERCENT

While BrandLIVE was the strongest criteria for selecting Digitas, the agency was firing on all other cylinders, including creative, branded content, analytics, R&D, and the metric many in the industry prize most: new business.

During 2012, the first year

Kinsella flew solo as Digitas chief, succeeding former CEO Laura Lang who left to run Time Inc., Digitas racked up 17 major new business wins, including Taco Bell (digital AOR), eBay (digital AOR), Aetna (e-commerce lead), Sprint (lead), Vevo, Panasonic (global), Uniqlo, Google Mobile, and Victoria's Secret. Kinsella says it was the agency's best new business year ever, and that new business grew 40 percent from 2011 and doubled 2010, contributing to net new revenues for the agency of \$70 million.

On the creative front, it was the most recognized digital agency in the industry's awards shows, winning 30 major awards, including nine Cannes

Lions, and four Effies.

If there was any icing on Digitas' 2012 cake, it was the evolution of its so-called NewFront initiative from an insular Digitas-only effort to kick-start digital content creation to a legit industry platform. The NewFront, which was originally conceived by former CEO Lang as a way to organize client brands with digital platforms and Hollywood content creators on behalf of Digitas, opened its doors to outside suppliers and competitors alike, evolving into a series of NewFronts produced by specific vendors such as AOL, Hulu, Google/YouTube, Microsoft and Yahoo, which invited rival agencies and their clients to participate in what is becoming akin to network television's famous upfronts.

Kinsella says the strategy was intentional, because Digitas realized the concept could never scale without leaving the agency's doors and becoming a neutral platform for the digital industry to develop new concepts. As proof of its success, even rival agency executives have sung Digitas' praises for doing it, and at presstime, Digitas announced that the Interactive Advertising Bureau was taking oversight of the NewFronts to ensure its neutrality going forward.

"By opening the doors and shifting it from a Digitas hosted event, we helped organize the industry to come together, pool their resources and communicate the value everyone brings to the marketplace," Kinsella explains. "We created the stage for which digital video could be seen as the powerful, scaled tool that it is." ▣



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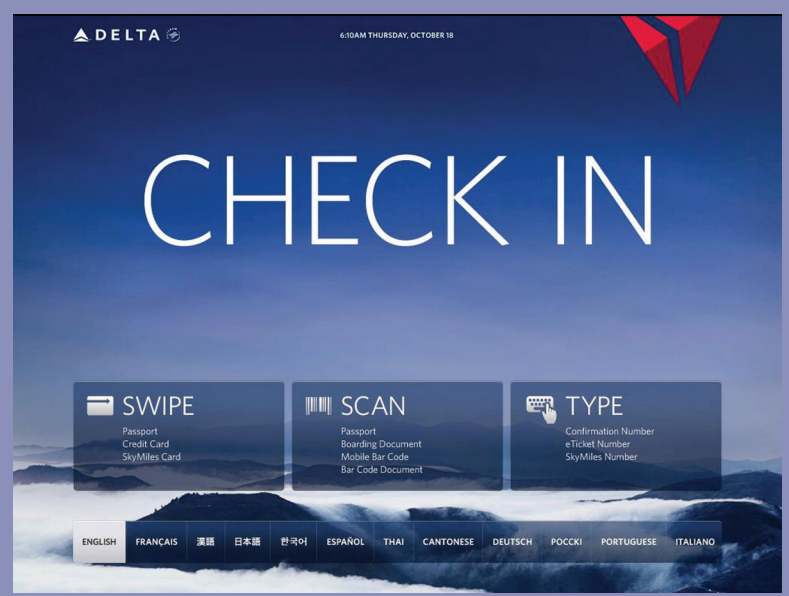
AGENCY OF THE YEAR

SILVER

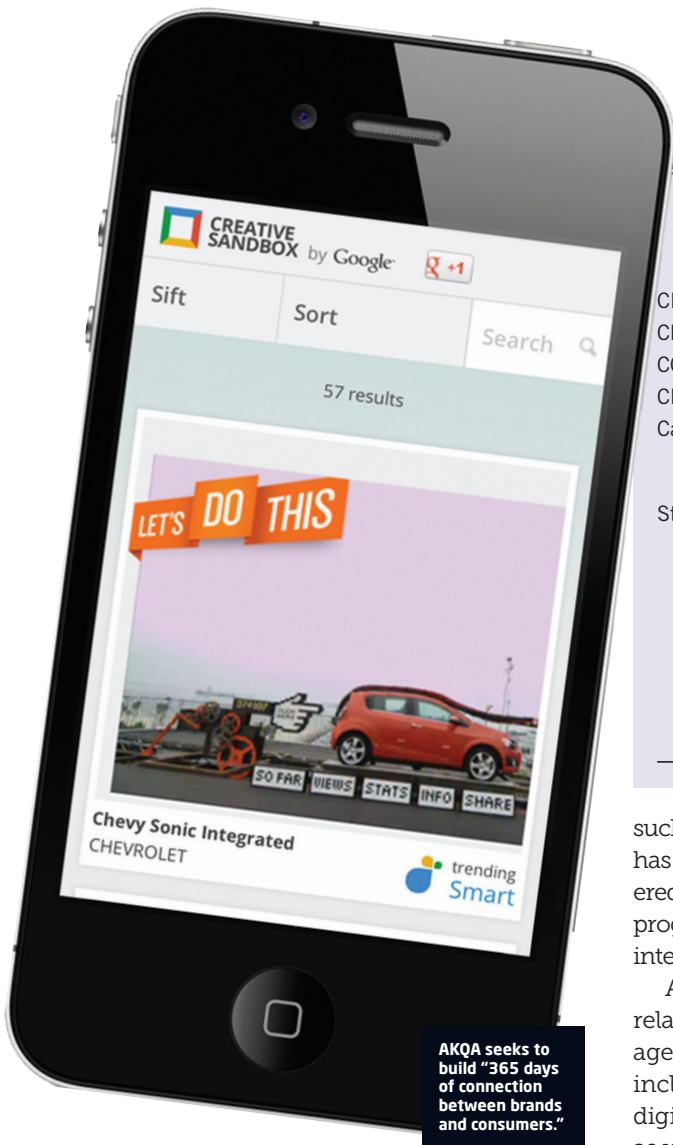


Same Time, Next Year

The reason this company keeps winning, year after year? It's taken its magic far beyond traditional definitions of advertising, romancing every platform it can find **by Daisy Whitney**



d agencies haven't traditionally been in the business of product development. But advertising isn't traditional anymore. The work AKQA has executed in the last year exemplifies the changing role of ad agencies today. Delivering a media buy is no longer enough, and agencies are finding they need to not only create content, but also to help their clients develop products.



AKQA seeks to build “365 days of connection between brands and consumers.”

Few are doing so, and that’s just one of the reasons AKQA’s work in 2012 for clients ranging from Gap to Nike to Delta stands out. “Spending eight months for a 360-degree marketing campaign that lasts two weeks is no longer a viable strategy,” says Rei Inamoto, AKQA’s chief creative officer. “We need to shift towards building 365 days of connection between brands and consumers. Brands should aim to have a much deeper and more meaningful connection with their audience even through a single channel

AKQA: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

CEO and Founder AJAZ AHMED
 Chairman TOM BEDECARRE
 CCO/VP REI INAMOTO
 CFO LESTER FEINTUCK
 Cast size 1,200+

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients AUDI, VERIZON, NIKE, XBOX, TARGET, GAP, ANHEUSER-BUSCH

BOX OFFICE

Forecasts 2012 revenues of around \$230M

CRITICAL REVIEWS

AKQA is part of digital creativity’s roots, “and continues to grow tall above most others in digital creativity.”

such as mobile.” That philosophy has framed the work AKQA delivered in 2012, from a Nike training program on Xbox Kinect, to an interactive catalog for Gap.

Also in 2012, AKQA struck new relationships as the lead digital agency for many brands. That includes becoming the global digital agency of record for Gap, as well as the digital agency of record for Verizon Wireless, Google+, Jordan, and Anheuser-Busch, which includes Budweiser, Bud Light and Stella Artois. AKQA opened four new offices in 2012 in Paris, Atlanta, Portland and Tokyo, bringing the agency total to 11 offices around the world.

Also this year, holding company WPP bought AKQA in June in a deal valued at \$540 million. AKQA is said to be on track to generate \$230 million in revenue. That follows AKQA’s double-digit revenue growth

for more than five years.

“Over the years there are a few digital agencies that have, in my opinion, stood as beacons of excellence in the digital advertising space,” says Adam Broitman, chief creative strategist for digital agency Something Massive, adding that AKQA’s work has inspired others in the business to approach campaigns in new ways.

“Exceptional digital advertising must go beyond the one-dimensional nature of advertising in days past,” he says. “True digital creativity must encompass not only great design and copy, it must consider new patterns for user experience and product design/innovation. From Fiat Eco Drive to Heineken Star Player, AKQA has created some of the finest digital thinking in the industry and has inspired the rest of us to go beyond traditional thought.”

Indeed, AKQA has innovated

new ways to mix paid and owned media with many of its centerpiece campaigns, rooted in products and “experiences” of brands that are then paired with digital, social or mobile media. Some examples:

THE CROWD-SOURCED CATALOG

In February, Gap launched *Styld.by*, created by AKQA, in an effort to connect with a younger demographic for its Spring 2012 collection. The digital catalog lets users share styles that inspire them, and new looks are added every few weeks, which can then be purchased through *Gap.com*. For the project, Gap worked with influential fashion bloggers and let them choose the models and the styling, in a sort of user-generated approach to creating a catalog. Then, consumers could select images of clothes and styles they liked and share them through social media, says Tom Bedecarre, chairman of AKQA. Gap has added new products for two additional catalogs since launch, and also planned to lean on the interactive digital catalog again for the holiday season.

“This is becoming a platform that Gap is using more broadly,” he says. “We tapped into an understanding of how shopping has become such an inherently social activity and how this lets people express their taste and see a broader expression of style from a bunch of different voices

“CLIENTS ARE LOOKING FOR DEEPER WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH THESE CUSTOMERS, AND YOU CAN CREATE THESE EXPERIENCES THAT LIVE ACROSS SOCIAL MEDIA AND MOBILE PLATFORMS AND THE WEB.”

and not just a singular voice from Gap.” The campaign relied on social media from stalwarts like Twitter and Facebook as well as Pinterest, making Gap one of the first brands to capitalize on Pinterest early in the year. The digital catalog was also paired with a media buy to drive awareness.

TRAINING, FLYING AND STORYTELLING

AKQA worked closely with Nike in the fall to craft a specialized training program for the Xbox Kinect. “We helped create an interface to track those arm and leg movements

and to customize your personal training experience using the Kinect technology,” Bedecarre says, “so the system is reading and responding and scoring the individual in real-time in a customized way.”

As part of making these new products, AKQA is also able to tap into the data it has on customers and how they interact with brands and technology. “We have a 100-person team handling media, search and analytics,” he says, “and because we are integrated, and have creative and technology and media strategy under one roof, it’s one of the reasons we can go up to a client and talk about how our understanding of analytics creates a more customized, personalized experience for someone.”





Then there's Delta, and while airline boarding passes have never typically been part of an agency's arsenal, AKQA helped to reshape that product for Delta as part of a mission to find ways to improve the travel experience for Delta customers. That's no small feat, but the first steps came in launching more digital products to make flying easier, from a new kiosk design to the boarding pass facelift that focused on key details of the flight and stripped away non-essential elements. Delta was slated to launch an iPad app by year's end that lets consumers look up information on Delta's destinations, download entertainment for their flights, and connect with their social networks. AKQA also helped design a Delta app that was one of the featured apps for Passbook when the iPhone 5 launched.

This sort of design work isn't *de rigueur* for the industry by any stretch, but the breadth of product development efforts at AKQA underscores how the agency has aimed to separate itself from the pack. The days of only crafting a media plan and buy are long gone, and agencies that thrive must also do more than strategize too. "That's just another way we are a little bit different," Bedecarre says. "We have such deep relationships with our clients like Delta, and we're now an integral part of how they're designing their mobile experience."

Bedecarre contends that the confluence of story, platform, software and product design is the foundation of the next phase of advertising. "We are transition-



ing from being a communications agency to being an agency that can design and develop products for clients. The world is becoming more digital, and understanding how to work and perform on tablets and mobile platforms, and understanding how big data is a part of this equation is essential," he says. "As you get deeper into these technologies you can't just have a writer and art director bringing out creative ideas for TV commercials and how to turn them into print ads and then banner ads. Clients are looking for deeper ways to engage with these customers, and you can create these experiences that live across social media and mobile platforms and the Web. Like a training program for Nike, rather than just running an ad for a new pair of shoes. It gives you greater value and makes you a partner with Nike 365 days a year."

CONSUMER EXPERIENCE + SOCIAL

The agency has also made some bold moves into experiential marketing paired with social media. For instance, this summer Kraft Foods' Wheat Thins paired up with Six Flags on a Labor Day promotion for its new flavors. Guests at the theme parks could actually check into their Facebook pages at the top of a roller coaster, and the first 100 riders to do so were able to skip the lines and ride the roller coaster again. The brand passed out samples too, and ran custom video spots on out-of-home TV screens at the theme parks and across the brand's social media channels. The brand teed up this in-park

promo with an Instagram promotion the month before with fans pretending in photos to be on rollercoasters.

Also marrying social media with in-person marketing, AKQA worked with Nissan Leaf to offer discounted rides in electric taxis in London prior to the Olympics with the pitch that an electric car is six times cheaper than a gas-fueled vehicle. Users had to book their rides via Twitter using a Nissan hashtag. The marketer



then replied to the tweets.

Other notable work in 2012 includes the launch of Halo 4 for Xbox, the latest installment in the bestselling and mega popular game franchise. AKQA created a so-called "aerial light performance" over London including the Halo 4 Glyph symbol, recognizable to most gamers. AKQA says the lighting show was created with more than 100,000 LED lights.

APPS AND BOOKS

On the app front, AKQA has pioneered a handful of forward-thinking apps for clients this year including its Nigella Quick Col-

lection for Nigella Lawson that's voice-controlled, which is helpful for the food-covered fingers that use it while cooking. AKQA also designed apps for Forevermark Diamond showing the steps going into making a diamond, for MTV to deliver its shows on the go, and for Volkswagen with footage and details on the cars for Volkswagen enthusiasts.

Last but not least, AKQA published a best-selling business book in 2012 in collaboration with

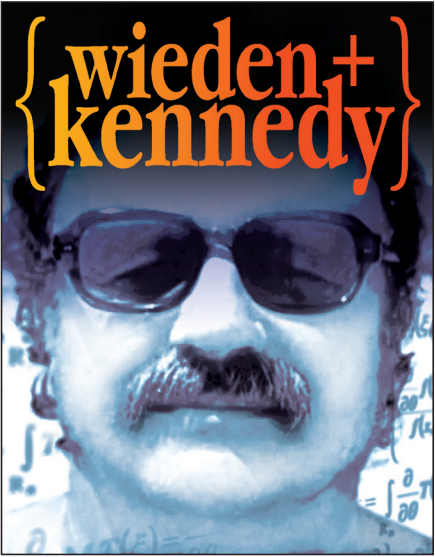
Nike called "Velocity: The Seven New Laws for a World Gone Digital", co-authored by Nike vp of Digital Sport Stefan Olander, and AKQA founder Ajaz Ahmed.

With the success AKQA has had so far, the inevitable question is "What's next?"

"Our goals remain to be able to create big impact and success for our clients through the kind of work we do with storytelling through software and product development," Bedecarre says. "From an employee perspective, we keep people motivated because they like to work with good people on good brands and do good work." □



AGENCY OF THE YEAR
BRONZE: CREATIVE



PROOF

From making moms the star of the Olympics to its Southern Comfort everyman, Wieden + Kennedy continues to solve the industry's problems, creating breakthrough + formulas

by Douglas Quenqua

Can an agency institutionalize creativity? The consistent success of Wieden + Kennedy, the quirky Portland-based network that was long known as the “Just Do It” guys, certainly makes it seem possible, if not easy. To the agency’s long list of creative awards and acknowledgments, including its fourth straight Emmy for a Procter & Gamble commercial won earlier this year, the still-independent shop can now add MediaPost’s Creative Agency of 2012.

The work, as they say, speaks for itself. In 2012, Wieden found fresh angles for old clients (Nike, ESPN) and old brands (Southern Comfort, OldSpice), furthered the resuscitation of an American icon (Chrysler), forced a comfort food out of its comfort zone (Velveeta Mac and Cheese), and, perhaps most impressively, found the humanity in a once-faceless consumer packaged goods giant (Procter & Gamble).

So how do you enforce such a high level of creativity across eight offices in seven countries?

One way is to work from a driving sense of insecurity, says Mark Fitzloff, partner and executive creative director.

“One way of summarizing the last 10 years of the Wieden + Kennedy story has been about diversifying our client base and moving beyond being known as the creative boutique in Portland that works with Nike,” he says.

“A lot of agencies will talk about spreading their financial risk and dependency by not having one client that pays the bills,” he continues, “we try to push that

strategy onto our creative work.” Rather than let one or two clients serve as the agency’s creative showcases, Fitzloff strives to make them all award winners.

Of course, a need to prove yourself will only get you so far. Dave Luhr, partner and global chief operating officer, says Wieden’s network-wide creativity owes a lot to its business strategy, particularly its dedication to strictly organic growth. “What we’ve done in each of our markets is start from scratch, hire the very best people – people who

reflect the values and cultures of this agency – and they help us start from scratch,” he says.

To seed the unique Wieden ingenuity, the agency places veteran creatives from established offices like Portland and New York in its new offices for long stretches of time. “We invest a lot of money to make sure we’re sending people to those offices, I don’t just mean for the week but I mean six months or a year,” Luhr says.

P&G’S MOMS: A DEFINING MOMENT

Whether it’s insecurity or business strategy or just something in the water coolers, Wieden remains one of the most consistently inventive agency networks in the business today. Never was this clearer than in 2012.

As the feel-good global event of the year, the 2012 London Summer Olympics provided a powerful platform for some of Wieden’s most effecting work. An Olympics commercial it made for Procter & Gamble – not a particular brand like Tide or Pampers, but the parent company itself – once again proved Wieden’s knack for coming up with the proverbial Big Idea.

When P&G decided it wanted to do some advertising around the games, it came to Wieden (with whom it already had a relationship thanks to Old Spice) “because we have a ton of sports marketing experience,” says Fitzloff. But sports and P&G aren’t exactly a natural fit. “Our initial reaction was, you’ve got a problem in that you have no authentic connection to sports or to the

performance of top international athletes,” Fitzloff says. “There’s nothing in your portfolio that would make me believe you’re somehow empowering these athletes.”

But while athletes aren’t a core target for P&G, moms are.

“Every Olympic athlete has a mom, and P&G empowers moms to do their jobs,” Fitzloff says. “And can you imagine what an Olympian job it must be to raise an Olympian athlete?”

The resulting commercial from Wieden’s Portland office, “Best Job,” was a globe-spanning, tear-jerking tribute to moms of all cultures who make their

children breakfast before dawn, drive them to swim practice, wash soiled uniforms, bandage sore feet, and, of course, cry when their kids triumph. The two-minute spot culminates in black copy against a white background: “The hardest best job

in the world, is the best job in the world. Thank you, mom.” The logos for Tide, Pampers, Gillette and Duracell flash briefly on screen, followed by “P&G, proud sponsor of moms.” The commercial won Wieden its fourth straight Emmy. “Sometimes the simplest ideas can be the biggest ideas,” says Luhr of the insight that bolstered the commer-

RATHER THAN LET ONE OR TWO CLIENTS SERVE AS THE AGENCY’S CREATIVE SHOWCASES, W + K STRIVES TO MAKE THEM ALL AWARD WINNERS.

Amid Olympic pandemonium, W+K and Nike took time to salute the souls of would-be athletes



AGENCY OF THE YEAR

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$$\frac{x-a}{m} = \frac{y-b}{n} = \frac{z}{1}$$

$$\sqrt{(x-c)^2 + y^2 + (x-c)^2}$$

cial, "and that was a very big idea."

Of course, Wieden's signature client, Nike, is a more natural fit for the Olympics. But the Portland office was eager to find a fresh angle, which this year meant a focus not on elite athletes, but on amateurs. Nike has been doing a lot of advertising "that's super aspirational — high testosterone stuff — about the larger-than-life, super athlete," says Fitzloff. "We wanted to do the opposite. That meant celebrating not just the unsung amateur athlete, but even just redefining what this idea is of an aspirational athlete, or somebody that we should give hero worship to."

The lead spot, "Find your greatness," features action shots of athletes from other "Londons" (in Ohio, Nigeria and Jamaica), under a British voiceover: "Greatness is not in one special place, and it is not in one special person. Greatness is wherever somebody is trying to find it."

Another effecting spot that got a lot of attention features the same voiceover over a single shot of an overweight teenage boy running along an empty country road at dawn.

STRETCHING ITS DEFINITION OF SOCIAL

While they haven't been working together all that long, Old Spice is another client with which Wieden is now inexorably linked. And in 2012, the agency's work for that brand continued to be weird and wonderful.

WIEDEN+KENNEDY: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

Co-founder and Global Executive Creative Director DAN WIEDEN
 Global CEO DAVE LUHR
 Global Executive Creative Director JOHN JAY
 Cast size 1,225 (WORLDWIDE)

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients . . . NIKE, ESPN, CHRYSLER, PROCTER & GAMBLE, FACEBOOK

BOX OFFICE

Estimated worldwide gross billings of \$2.87B

CRITICAL REVIEWS

Bold ideas and consistently strong execution make this left-brained indie holdout a perennial creative standout

Having retired (for now) the actor Isaiah Mustafa, who won fame as Old Spice Guy for his subtle comedic touch and chiseled physique, Wieden focused instead on actor and muscleman Terry Crews. Furthering the brand's reputation for bizarre but entertaining digital work, Wieden made a Web video called *Muscle Music*: A barely clothed Crews sits in a room full of ramshackle instruments, from a washtub drum to saxophones rigged with flamethrowers, with sensors attached to his muscles. With each muscle he flexes, another instrument plays. But the real attraction comes at the end, when Crews yells, "Now you try!" By pressing any key on his keyboard, the user can manipulate Crews' muscles, and hence the music. The video captures the users' creation, which he can then share on Vimeo.

And in one of the more impressive stunts in advertising this year, Wieden released an unusual help wanted ad for a social media strategist for the Old Spice account. In order to get the job, applicants had to

complete one of 10 challenges: Get the most people to friend your mother or your father on Facebook in a single week; create the most reviewed recipe on allrecipes.com in a single week using cottage cheese; upload the most pictures of your armpit(s) to Instagram during the course of the challenge.

The stunt — which is, technically, not a stunt, since Fitzloff says they are in the process of actually hiring someone — not only won Wieden (and Old Spice) reams of publicity, but sparked controversy among social media "experts."

"A lot of people on that side of the industry were really pissed off and said it demonstrated our utter lack of understanding of the category," says Fitzloff. "But other people were saying, 'Hold on, take a look at these challenges and think about what it would take to win them. If those aren't the skill sets required of a really savvy manipulator of social media, then what is?'"

But perhaps no Wieden work was more controversial this past year than its commercial

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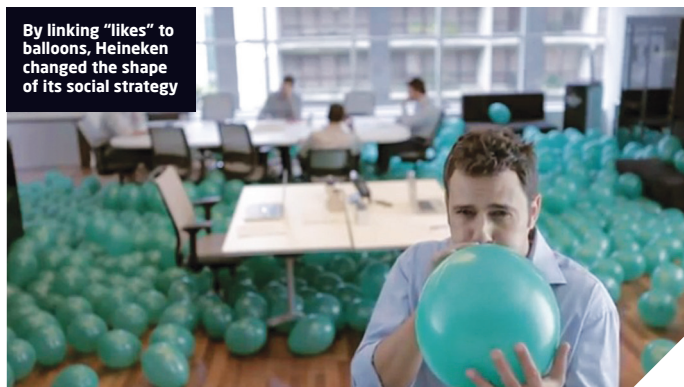
for Facebook, the first one ever made for the social media site. The 90-second spot that compared Facebook to tools that help people gather together — a chair, a doorbell, an airplane — was alternately hailed as genius and inscrutable. Gizmodo said,

“Facebook’s first ad is its worst ad,” and Mashable turned out a spoof that mockingly compared Facebook to a cheese pizza and dinosaurs. (To see why *OMMA* names it one of the year’s 10 worst videos, turn to p. 58)

Fitzloff stands by the spot. “You’re not explaining what Facebook is,” he says, shooting down one of the more common explanations for the ad. “You’re trying to reframe what people are already doing.” Because Facebook is free, “the risk is that it becomes trivial, like it’s a time waste.” The commercial was intended to reframe the Facebook experience in grander, philosophical terms. “If it sounded a little heavy and self-important,” Fitzloff says, “all that was fully intended.”

Both Amsterdam and Sao Paulo this year produced work that helped provide a global voice for Heineken, which had been lacking one. “Heineken was a very decentralized client in the past, so it was hard to build a disciplined voice for it,” Luhr says. Commercials from Amsterdam used an exuberant, cheesy lounge singer to portray the brand as fun and off-beat, char-

By linking “likes” to balloons, Heineken changed the shape of its social strategy



acteristics that were reinforced by a Facebook campaign from Sao Paulo in which a Heineken employee blew up a balloon for every like his post received (grand total: 12,632 balloons).

The London office took the global Web-fueled obsession with cats that act like humans and turned it into a cinematic potboiler. In a 60-second spot for milk brand Cravendale, a regime of evil felines kidnaps and brainwashes milkmen. “Not on our watch, pussies,” says the voiceover. An accompanying hashtag, #catswiththumbs, continues to generate scores of daily tweets.

PROVING THAT CREATIVITY IS STILL RELEVANT

And although Wieden lost Target in the U.S. this year — in spite of a fun, highly lauded commercial from the New York office that featured brightly dressed acrobats and dancers emerging from a hot air balloon to magically redecorate a city — it quickly erased the deficit by picking up superstore Tesco in the UK. “The best work of the year from London hasn’t been seen yet,” says Luhr. “Wait till

you see the holiday campaign for Tesco.”

Of course, in an age of metrics and limited budgets, it’s worth asking whether creativity still matters, at least as much as it used to. Are clients still interested in agencies that win industry creative

awards? Is creativity, for lack of a better term, out of fashion?

Fitzloff even concedes that Wieden’s focus on creativity is why it doesn’t have much in the way of mobile work to brag about. “Of all the media choices you can make, mobile is the one that seems the most aligned with utility rather than storytelling,” he says, “and we’re a storytelling agency. So we’re probably slightly hamstrung there.” (Though to be fair, “When will we see creativity in mobile” is a perennial question in the advertising business).

Nonetheless, Luhr believes that “creativity is still the Holy Grail in our business,” he says. “Clients want work that resonates, and our work has been really good at doing that.”

The proof, he says, is that during the economic downturn, Wieden’s business has actually added business every year.

“When everything is good, it’s hard to make a change because, hey, who’s arguing?” he says. “Well, everything hasn’t been up the past few years, and I think we’ve benefited from clients looking at their bottom line and saying, ‘Hey, I think we can do better.’”

AGENCY
OF THE YEAR

BRONZE: MOBILE



BRING IT ON

To reach the fast-growing audience of smartphone owners, Omnicom's PHD isn't afraid to pump up the noise **by Gail Belsky**

For five days in October, Omnicom media agency PHD staged an experimental theatre production called Mobility Week in its midtown Manhattan offices. Cast and crew included most of its staffers, more than 20 of its client companies, and 40 industry thought leaders representing all things mobile: technology, inventory, analytics, audience, and apps. On each day of this mini-conference, PHD presented panel discussions and hands-on demonstrations on a different mobile theme. The purpose was to do in one place what the agency had done all over the place last year — explaining, promoting, and inspiring the growth of mobile advertising.

Agency chief Monica Karo is on a mission to redefine the medium. The word "mobile" refers to phones; "mobility" describes what consumers do with their phones. "It's about all the ways your content goes with you, everywhere you want," says Karo. "The behavior is to be mobile all the time." She's not kidding. A 2012 study by the Pew Research Center shows that "connected viewers" can't part with their smartphones for anything — including watching TV. According to the research, 38 percent of cell owners used their phones to amuse themselves during commercials, and 23 percent texted friends who were watching the same show — while it was on.



AGENCY OF THE YEAR



PHD's star turns: Harnessing Instagram for Foot Locker and geo-targeting for Tums



Karo, like many other industry prognosticators, believes 2013 will be the year that mobile explodes — and she's determined to ensure that PHD and its clients are front and center when it does. "We've been talking about mobile for a few years, but mobile wasn't ready for us," says Karo, who joined PHD from Omnicom sister agency OMD in March. "Consumers weren't ready for what the industry has to offer, but in the last six months, a lot of things have been coming together."

As smartphone users got into the technology, marketers increasingly embraced the idea of allocating dollars to an unproven and complex medium that's literally in the hands of 50 percent of American consumers. From the user side, the numbers look great. Research firm eMarketer expects total mobile penetration to hit 77 percent this year, with nearly half of those consumers using smartphones. That equals 120 million people who can receive ad messages anywhere and everywhere they go.

Ad support is gaining, too. Mobile spending is expected to rise 80 percent in 2012 to \$2.6 billion, according to eMarketer. But the numbers are still out of whack. Mobile only accounts for 7 percent of the marketing pie, even though smartphone users drive more than 12 percent of Internet traffic, according to data firm StatCounter. Clearly, a sizable gap remains between opportunity and investment, and PHD has been out there trying to close it as fast as possible.

Between August 2011 and July 2012, the agency hit the road to meet with 15 clients in categories where mobile was, or would soon be, disrupting their business. It made detailed mobile landscape presentations to each one, outlining marketing opportunities, competitor initiatives, and immediate testing recommendations. The

deep-dive approach worked; all but one of those clients boosted their mobile budgets.

"We don't have any feet-draggers," Karo says of the agency's clients. "They just don't know where to start. They don't have the expertise."

GUIDING CLIENTS THROUGH THE MOBILE MAZE

For PHD, that's been a key part of the lesson plan this year — helping clients figure out the skill set and organizational structure they need to have internally in order to navigate and own the mobile space. "Hear-

ing from us about what we look at, and the conversations we're having with mobile vendors, gives them a sense of what they should have on their side," says Karo.

By the time clients are talking about in-house competencies, however, they're already in the space to some extent. Many marketers aren't even close, according to Alexis Rask, Vice President and General Manager of Brand Partnerships at Shopkick, an app that dispenses offers and rewards to shoppers, and a Mobility Week participant. "Ten percent of marketers we talk to are really making mobile a huge priority, and 25 percent are acknowledging that it's an important channel," she says. The rest, it seems, are waiting to see how it goes.

What they are most likely waiting for is someone to come up with a standard measure for ROI — an issue that plagues most

digital media. "Next year I think the desire is there to really make it game changing," says Karo, "but one of things that may hold mobile back is having a common currency by which we measure. The money's coming from somewhere, and clients are asking, 'what am I losing over here and gaining over there?'"

To try and answer some of those questions, PHD and Omnicom Media Group's Data Policy and Privacy Group commissioned an audit of more than 75 mobile technology companies to determine the best mobile measurement and tracking solutions. It examined everything: technology, scalability, customer service, business analysis, data security and privacy. The audit led to at least one piece of new business: *The Economist* hired PHD to acquire app downloads and to drive subscriptions. During the year, PHD has helped launch more than 15

THE AGENCY, ALONG WITH ONE OF ITS TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS, CAME UP WITH A PROCEDURE THAT SHRANK A TIME-SUCKING FIVE-STEP PROCESS INTO TWO QUICK CLICKS.

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other apps in various app stores, with nearly all making it into the top 25 in its category.

If PHD's mobile clients are more evolved than most, it's partly because their agency is, according to Rask. "We see a huge appetite among clients to better understand what to do in mobile, and how to measure. Some agencies are proactive, some less so. There are a few players in the space that really get it, and PHD is one of the ones I put on that short list."

Not only does the agency regularly head to Silicon Valley to meet with technology providers, it brings clients there to have very specific dialogues surrounding their business — a critical move, as far as Rask is concerned. "There isn't a one size fits all approach to mobile. Each consumer is so connected to their device, but that means there are so many ways for marketers to engage," she says. "There needs to be a robust dialogue between agency, client, and technology."

BREAKING GROUND WITH TECHNOLOGY

When PHD wasn't wearing its tutor hat last year, it produced innovative award-winning campaigns for such clients as Foot Locker and GlaxoSmithKline. For Foot Locker, PHD created a summer campaign called #kickstagram, which used the social media site Instagram to drive consumers to the retailer's page. By uploading photos of their favorite kicks, and tag-

ging them with #kickstagram and @footlocker, users had the chance of having their photos showcased on Foot Locker's page and website, and in store windows. The creative was fun, the social media platform was new, but it was the technology behind the mobile banner ads that really broke ground.

"Foot Locker asked us to do something with Instagram, and we knew we needed to simplify the "following" process," says Sal Candela, PHD's Director of Mobile. "We knew if we made it more efficient, we'd increase the following."

The agency, along with one of its technology partners, came up with a procedure that shrank a time-sucking five-step process into two quick clicks. Tapping the banner once opened the Instagram app and directed users right to the Foot Locker page. A second click on the "follow" banner, and users were in. That technological advance "increased the number of Instagram followers six-fold in two-to three weeks," says Candela.

Pioneering, yes. Surprising, no. Not to Foot Locker, at least. "PHD constantly thinks outside the box and excites us to introduce integrated and innovative programs to support our Foot Locker brands," says EVP of marketing Stacy Cunningham. "They take the time to deliver opportunities that engage our customers in relevant and meaningful ways. Our customers were excited to upload pictures of their sneakers for all to see."

LEVERAGING GEO-LOCATION FOR TUMS

For GlaxoSmithKline, the agency's mission was to support the launch of the Tums Freshers by driving shoppers to the shelf. The antacid/breath freshener comes in a small portable container that's hard to find on the shelf, so PHD turned to Shopkick come up with a mobile geo-targeting program aimed at people already in the store. "When consumers walked into one of our selected retailers, we served a full-screen ad, and also prompted them to pick up the product and scan it to learn more about what made Tums Freshers unique," says Candela. "On paper the idea made sense, but the proof was in the results." Three months after the launch, the purchase intent among Freshers scanners was almost equal to that of the 82-year-old standard Tums brand.

"From my end, PHD and GlaxoSmithKline both recognized the power of mobile to drive engage-



PHD: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

CEO MONICA KARO
 COO and Chief Digital Officer CRAIG ATKINSON
 Director of Mobile SAL CANDELA
 Cast size 475

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients GLAXOSMITHKLINE, VONAGE, OMNICOM (GLOBAL),
 SONY ERICSSON (GLOBAL)

BOX OFFICE

Projected 2012 U.S. gross billings of \$4.47B

CRITICAL REVIEWS

Innovation, creativity and a commitment to industry education gives the Omnicom unit top billing in mobile

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

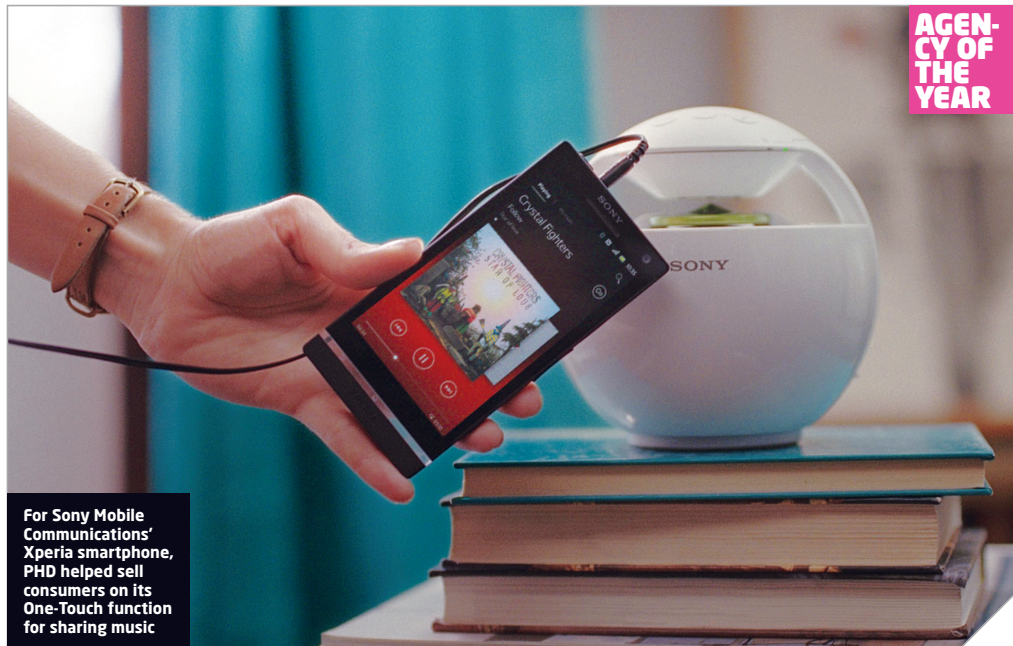
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12. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data: September 2012
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation:

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies:	7,781	7,975
b. Legitimate Paid and/or Requested Distribution:		
(1) Individual Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541:	6,225	6,100
(2) Copies Requested by Employers for Distribution to Employees by Name or Position Stated on PS Form 3541:	0	0
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid or Requested Distribution Outside USPS:	0	0
(4) Requested Copies Distributed by Other Mail Classes Through USPS:	0	0
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation:	6,225	6,100
d. Nonrequested Distribution:		
(1) Outside County Nonrequested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541:	0	0
(2) In-County Nonrequested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541:	0	0
(3) Nonrequested Copies Distributed Through the USPS by Other Classes of Mail:	210	210
(4) Nonrequested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail:	1,305	1,625
e. Total Nonrequested Distribution:	1,516	1,835
f. Total Distribution:	7,741	7,935
g. Copies not Distributed:	40	40
h. Total:	7,781	7,975
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation:	80.41%	76.87%

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down on making sure that they're as educated and cutting edge as they can be. It was awesome to see the engagement level in the audience."

To Karo, Candela, and agency cdo Craig Atkin-



For Sony Mobile Communications' Xperia smartphone, PHD helped sell consumers on its One-Touch function for sharing music

ment...physical engagement between a person and a product," says Rask.

The need for both clients and agency staffers to understand that power prompted Candela to develop and moderate a panel discussion called "Using Location and Proximity to Drive Commerce" on day four of "Mobility Week." For Rask, one of the panelists, the event cemented her view of PHD as a true industry leader. "I was struck by how invested they are in making mobile work for their clients across the board — doubling

son, the small, informal conference that clogged PHD's hallways for a week was as critical to the education of agency staffers as it was for clients. "The main buzz for the teams internally was, 'How can you use mobility in a way that's outside what you're doing,'" says Candela. "Five or six teams scheduled time to meet with me to talk about they could do. It was not theory any longer."

The daily hive of activity, as 50 to 100 people moved from the common space where the panel discussions took place to the boardroom where experiential labs were set up, created a buzz for clients, too, according to Candela. "To hear questions being asked by clients in other categories, and talk about best practices and what others are doing in other categories — it was just really interesting. And the partners that came to the panels were more candid than at general industry events.

One partner-panelist came away from the session with a very vivid and long-lasting image. "The audience was using their phones while we were talking, and I don't think they were answering email," says Rask. "They were looking at what we were discussing right there, checking out the technology. It was really, really cool. And it speaks to the importance of the medium."

If the mark of a great show is the number of people who mill around after it's over, hashing and rehashing what they've seen and heard, Mobility Week was a runaway hit. After the last presentation, PHD hosted a cocktail party. The audience stuck around for two hours. □



AGENCY OF THE YEAR
BRONZE: SOCIAL

THE PRODUCERS



Thinking far beyond Facebook and branded content, Pereira & O'Dell knows how to put on a show that the world can't wait to share **by David Gianatasio**

Pereira & O'Dell had two defining moments in 2012.

One arrived early, in January, when the San Francisco-based agency bid farewell to its largest client, the University of Phoenix, declining to participate in a review for the business. "We knew it was going to change the agency, alter our course forever," says CEO Andrew O'Dell.

Though the account had helped put POD on the map and generated considerable revenue,

O'Dell's assessment includes the quality and scope of POD's creative output. So it's no surprise that the agency's other defining moment — perhaps even more important for POD's identity and future than rebounding from U of Phoenix's exit — was all about the work.

senior management changes on the client side convinced agency execs that it was time to move on — and O'Dell doesn't regret it.

This summer, POD launched "The Beauty Inside," a groundbreaking social film for Intel and Toshiba. The work "was a defining moment not only in 2012, but in the entire life of the agency," says Pereira. "It was proof that it is possible to combine great stories and technology and make people love it. The kind of response we got from the audience was the most touching we have ever seen. It changed the agency."

POD doubled down on new-business efforts, adding assignments from BevMo, Burger King, Fiat, Henkel and Mattel. By year's end, the agency had increased its staff from 90 to 120 across offices in San Francisco, New York and Sao Paulo, and boosted revenue nearly 40 percent to approximately \$20 million.

As a creatively driven enterprise, POD lives and dies by the quality of its work and the level of innovation it generates to drive buzz for clients. The product adheres to O'Dell's mantra, "What if advertising were

O'Dell believes 2012 "on all levels has easily been the best year" for POD since he and chief creative officer P.J. Pereira left i-shop AKQA nearly five years ago to found their own agency.



invented today?" Campaigns for several clients in 2012 strove to push the envelope and take branded social content beyond where it had been before.

EVERY GREAT IDEA IS SOCIAL

"Every great idea is social by nature," Pereira says. "If it's not social, it's not great. If the work we do is not worth sharing, it's not worth doing."

Indeed, the agency seems social from the top down. Pereira, 39, born in Rio de Janeiro, and O'Dell, 42, from Tennessee, project a serious but approachable management style. They're dedicated to growing their business but plugged into what's going on outside adland. That trait is typified by the agency's BarrelHouse space in San Francisco, where it hosts community gatherings and performances to raise funds for causes like the Special Olympics and the SF AIDS Foundation.

The notion of an increasingly social, interconnected world — and advertising's role in it — came up at the Cannes Lions Festival of Creativity in June, when Pereira interviewed former U.S. President Bill Clinton at an event hosted by POD's Brazilian parent Grupo ABC.

On stage in France, Clinton told Pereira, "We are living in the most interdependent era in history," and the ability to work together "to solve common challenges" is paramount.

That spirit informs POD's creative, which, at its best, exudes good humor, an awareness of community and extreme sociability.

The shop defines "social" as more than endless trawling for Facebook "likes" or posting client updates on Twitter consisting of logos, inane quizzes

and pleas to "Please RT." Likewise, "branded content" has moved beyond awkward product placements or ham-fisted efforts to weave client wares into the storylines.

POD's efforts are more organic, its approach intrinsically tied to the personality of the client's product or service. This philosophy helped lure those new accounts in 2012 and continues, perhaps, to push the agency — and, by extension, the dubious art of advertising — to the next level.

In adland's recent past, BBDO blurred the line between entertainment and promotions with its BMW Films series, and Crispin Porter + Bogusky made arguably the first "must-share" interactive splash with Burger King's Subservient Chicken.

POD is the latest link in the chain, fusing traditional storytelling with social tools to produce content that offers multiple layers of consumer engagement.

IT'S WHAT'S INSIDE THAT COUNTS

"The Beauty Inside" for Intel and Toshiba exemplifies work that straddles the line between old and new media. What's more, it brings POD's penchant for creating evocative and engaging social campaigns into sharp focus.

The six-part online series, with each segment running less than 10 minutes, followed "The Inside Experience," the agency's 2011 social film for Intel and Toshiba. That first effort told the noir tale of a woman trapped inside a room, with fans helping to guide the story via Facebook and Twitter.

"The Inside Experience" was well received, but "The Beauty Inside" refined the concept and proved more subtle and resonant. Its focus on the

universal desire to be loved and valued for who we are, regardless of outward appearances, was inherently social to start with. Such themes are a natural fit for shareable media — and dovetail with the broader branding mission to play off Intel’s iconic “Inside” positioning for its processors.

The story follows Alex, who wakes up each morning as an entirely new person. Young, old, short, tall, black, white, male, female — Alex never knows what the new day will bring, and he has no control over the transformations. In his strange world, feelings of loneliness and dislocation are constants, driving Alex to a series of one-night stands. (To protect his secret, Alex never takes anyone back to his place, and always leaves before that evening’s partner wakes up. There are some logic gaps, naturally — such a plan would be unworkable in real life — but the concept works well in the metaphorical context of the film.)

Alex’s routine is interrupted when he meets Leah, an antiques dealer he immediately falls for and takes out on a date. (The idea of antiques having “shared” the lives of many different people is a nice touch.)

Alex decides he can’t live without Leah. Given his “Twilight Zone” existence, he struggles with what to do next. “They say love conquers all. It also ruins everything,” he laments.

Ultimately, our hero takes a chance and tells Leah the truth. “Outside, I’m different,” he explains, having taken the form of a thirty-something woman. “But inside, it’s Alex.”

There’s a happy ending — this is advertising, after all — though the denouement is legitimately moving despite its basic predictability.

Leah accepts Alex for the person he is inside, and his shape-shifting days are over. Alex’s final line: “I used to wonder if she was the reason why it all stopped. Because maybe she could see who I was.”

Sure, it’s convenient that he finishes as a handsome adult heterosexual male, rather than a colicky six-month-old with explosive diaper rash. Still, the film was brave enough to show Alex as a woman of various ages interacting with Leah — and his settling into one form they both appreciate feels less like a cop-out than a logical conclusion.

Veteran ad critic Barbara Lippert, who writes MediaPost’s Mad Blog, calls the work “a genius insight into our schizophrenic culture. It really does go Kafka and Rod Serling one better.”

As a piece of dramatic storytelling, “The Beauty Inside” follows the traditional TV series episodic arc, mixing in social elements and brand message in ways that don’t detract from the overall effect.

The appearance of Toshiba laptops, powered by Intel processors, seems unforced, as Alex keeps a daily video diary showing all the different people he has become. (He closes each entry with the melancholy, ironic catchphrase: “That’s it for me.”) Fans who auditioned via Webcam for the film portrayed the versions of Alex shown on the laptop screen, and those following his travails could interact with the campaign through the usual social channels.

Bill Green, executive vice president of strategy at Noble Mouse, who blogs at AdVerve, believes “The Beauty Inside” represents the next iteration of interactive narrative advertising. “Anyone who thinks of branded content always goes back to BMW Films as the be-all, end-all, and assumes that any agency trying something even close is an automatic fail,” he says. “The difference here is that while BMW Films was a noir, action-focused piece, ‘Beauty’s stories are more poignant and personal — engaging the viewer on a deeper level.”

The client is pleased with the effort, both for its creativity and measurable results.

PEREIRA & O’DELL: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

Co-founder and Chief Creative Officer P.J. PEREIRA
Co-founder and CEO ANDREW O’DELL
Executive Creative Director JAIME ROBINSON
CFO NANCY DAUM
Cast size 120

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients . . . BEVMO, BURGER KING, CHEESECAKE FACTORY,
CORONA, FIAT, HANKEL, INTEL, MATTEL, SKYPE, YAHOO

BOX OFFICE

\$20M in annual revenue

CRITICAL REVIEWS

Innovative output that bridges the gap between traditional creative and advertising’s increasingly social and highly immersive future



AGENCY OF THE YEAR

POD's Skype campaign attracted 13 million new users in the U.S. and UK

"It was an opportunity to make an emotional connection and be seen as an essential character by the target 18-to-34 year old audience who typically sees the Toshiba brand as a brand for their Dad," says Billie Goldman, partner marketing manager at Intel.

Per Goldman, "The Beauty Inside" garnered 69.7 million global views, compared to 50 million for the previous year's "Inside Experience." The average viewer age was slightly more than 23, almost evenly split between men and women, which means POD was right on the mark in terms of the target demographic. (The "Inside Experience" audience had been more than 60 percent male.)

CONNECTING WITH SKYPE...TEACHING SNOOP DOGG NEW TRICKS

While "The Beauty Inside" was POD's biggest creative splash in 2012, other campaigns are worth noting. These include efforts for Skype, the Kingsize Slim Rolling Papers of iconic rapper Snoop Dogg and an animated sci-fi Web series from Tom Hanks.

The products and services being advertised couldn't be more different — and the media brought to bear are diverse and dissimilar. Yet each campaign in its own way is deeply social and attempts to inspire extended brand engagement.

(Intriguingly, all three focus on modes of communication, which was also true of "The Beauty Inside," as Alex and Leah struggled for understanding. Consciously or not, this forms a major theme of POD's creative oeuvre.)

"It's Time For Skype" uses print, outdoor and Web iterations to position the Internet-based voice and video communications service as a warmer, more human way to connect than alternatives like Twitter and Facebook.



"140 characters doesn't equal staying in touch," reads one copy line. "When did it become OK to text mom happy birthday?" asks another. The campaign's main social thrust consists of an app on Skype's Facebook page that lets users create and share "Humoticons" — pictures of themselves expressing emotions.

"We launched this at a time when the question (of whether technology has gotten too impersonal) was really becoming part of the zeitgeist, and that helped it get great online media coverage to get people talking," says POD's executive creative director Jaime Robinson.

The company credits the campaign with a 20 percent rise in Skype.com feature page views, driving 8.3 million site activities.

"This campaign really got to our roots as a disruptive brand while at the same time playing to what makes our brand great, that we enable people to have experiences together, even when they are apart," says Francie Strong, Skype's director of global marketing.

Ask Dabitch Wappling, who follows the ad biz at the Adland blog, says the approach for Skype

works perfectly because, at its core, "it's the truth: Skype is face-time."

A more traditional mode of communication — a book printed on paper — is central to a POD campaign that surely qualifies as one of the year's most memorably tongue-in-cheek pieces of intellectual property.

Rolling Words: A Smokable Songbook is a volume of Snoop Dogg's lyrics printed on his branded rolling papers, bound with hemp and twine. The effort plays off the rapper's bad-boy toker image and constitutes a rare instance in which form and function are literally rolled into one.

The book itself is a social vehicle, says Pereira, because, despite a limited run, it generated considerable attention in the media and among the public, giving it a longer "shelf life" than the work would've had if volumes were mass produced.

Only 100 copies were actually printed. "One-hundred books wouldn't constitute a real project a while ago. But when you

create 100, put them in the right hands and promote them online, it turns into something big," says Pereira. "Online it had more than 1 million views — that is what counts, because the book is more expensive to produce than the product itself. You have to look at that with fresh eyes. The rules are different now."

The book won a Gold Lion at Cannes in the Branded Content & Entertainment category.

Another of the agency's ambitious social efforts in 2012 was its campaign touting "Electric City," a Tom Hanks-penned animated series set in a post-apocalyptic world. (The show, 10 five- to seven-minute episodes, debuted this summer on Yahoo as the online behemoth's first scripted original program.)

POD created "Tap Joint" an online venue that focused on a Morse Code-type transmitter known as a Tap Kit. This exercise in alternate-reality gaming challenged users to decipher codes to view show previews and plot clues.

Some users would visit occasionally for general information, while others would drill deep into the game and work hard to decipher clues, sharing the experience online with friends.


"We wanted to turn 'Electric City' into a cult before it even launched," says Pereira.

HOW BIG CAN YOU GET BEFORE YOU SUCK?

Based on the layered ARG approach of "Tap Joint" and the social thrust of POD's work overall, Lippert says the agency is inventing advertising's future by "building infrastructure for everybody else."

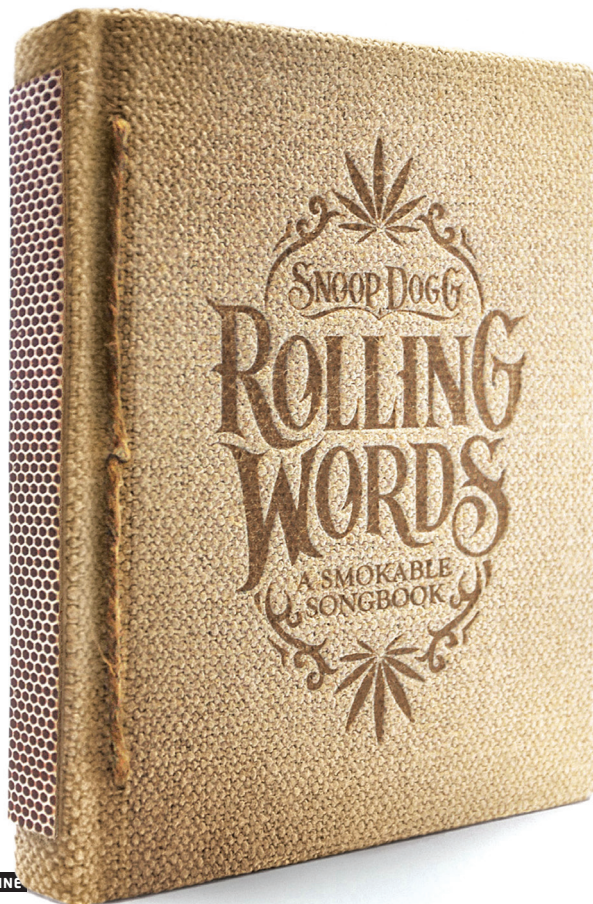
Green concurs. "Agencies like Pereira & O'Dell, that are able to bridge the so-called traditional-digital divide, are what matter now."

Of course, it's easy to innovate as a young "hot shop," but the larger an agency grows the tougher it is to stay on the leading edge. As Pereira and O'Dell enter their 40s, and POD perhaps takes on larger, more conservative clients seeking safe ad solutions, won't the work become less creative?

"Scale has been making us better," says Pereira, who points to 2012's body of work as proof. Adds O'Dell: "I'm not worried about that. We have a long way to go." 

"YOU HAVE TO LOOK AT THAT WITH FRESH EYES, NOT WITH HOW YOU USED TO LOOK AT THINGS. THE RULES ARE DIFFERENT NOW."

PJ PEREIRA



Printing just 100 copies, POD generated 1 million views for Snoop Dogg's "smokable songbook"

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THE FANTASTICKS

For its strategic breakthroughs, mediahub/Mullen goes beyond asking what to buy. Instead, it creates an enduring love story between the traditional and digital realms. Think of it as Media with a capital M. **by Gavin O'Malley**

AGENCY OF THE YEAR
BRONZE: MEDIA PLANNING



Even before winning National Geographic and hitting a homerun campaign for JetBlue, John Moore knew 2012 was going to be a big year for mediahub.

Sure, Moore and his team had seen success since he joined Mullen's media-planning and -buying shop in 2009. They quickly won the JetBlue account, set up a enviable mobile division, and launched a media-insights tool named Nexus designed to help clients better navigate media channels.

But, as Moore explains, it took time for mediahub to "build its own identity within the Mullen framework."

"First, we proved that we could win media-only new business against the strongest and biggest unbundled shops in the country," says mediahub/Mullen's Chief Media Officer. "As mediahub started to build its own identity within the Mullen framework, it was critical to break through in this area."

The payoff? "In 2012, we beat notable shops like Universal

McCann, Spark, MPG and Mindshare."

Along with winning the National Geographic

Channels business — worth an estimated \$40 million — the group retained the Timberland account, while picking up new media assignments from Ask.com, Olympus, '47 Brand and CenturyLink.

Existing and new, clients sense that Moore and company are operating at a higher level. "mediahub is distinct from other agencies in that they take pride in experimenting and taking calculated risks with media investments," says Lisa Borrromeo, Director of Advertising & Brand at JetBlue.

"Every mediahub plan is infused with a dose of 'What can we try that has never been done before?'" Borrromeo says. "Mediahub is not shy about asking publisher partners to create new units for us to test. In fact, they foster relationships that allow for beta and first-to-market opportunities."

JETBLUE'S GAME FACE

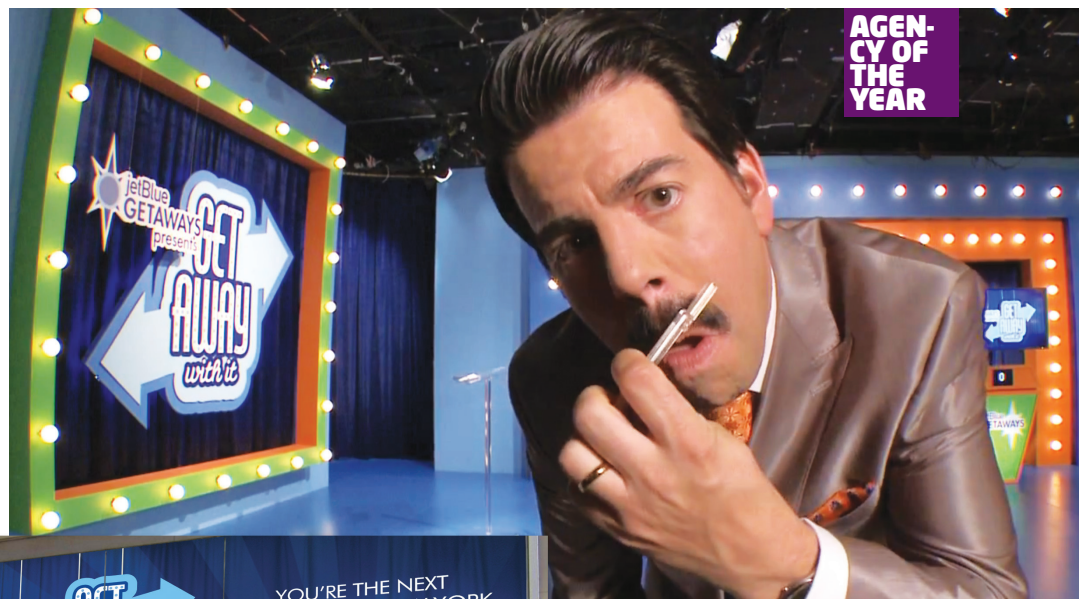
That approach was clearly on display in "Get Away With It," an ambitious JetBlue campaign that gave mediahub the opportunity to rethink the use of original content.

"We landed on a breakthrough content idea by unearthing a powerful insight about how consumers think about packaged, inclusive vacations," says Keith Lusby, svp and Group Media Director at mediahub.

"The insight was that people think about all-inclusive, packaged vacations in the context of game shows. Particularly iconic, venerable shows like *The Price is Right* and *Wheel of Fortune*," Lusby explains. "Rather than flood travel content channels with standard banners and :30 tv spots, we mapped out a different consumer journey based on research that told us consumers were looking to be inspired by where to go."

Mediahub marketed "Get Away With It" as a TV show and promoted it on entertainment sites like TVGuide.com and People.com. It also provided access to the content by streaming the live shows — 25 over a five-day period — in banners, as well as installing "storefront" type interactive units in high pedestrian traffic areas in Boston and New York.

Finally, the shop provided real utility by partnering with social sites like Viggie — where visi-



tors earned points for watching content — while pushing mobile promotions, including add-to-calendar functionality to remind people about show times.

The content-led strategy helped mediahub solve JetBlue's issues with both brand familiarity, which went up 117 percent, and online linkage to JetBlue. (That soared 243 percent as a result of mediahub's efforts.)

Better yet, on average consumers watched over nine minutes of each 12-minute episode, while they were live-streaming in banners on third-party Web sites.

"We went into this thinking maybe 1,500 people would sign up to be contestants," he says. "After all, we ran relatively moderate media support in less than 10 per-

cent of the country, and the sign-up process was 10 to 15 minutes long and required a Skype account ... We had over 13,000 sign up in the first week."

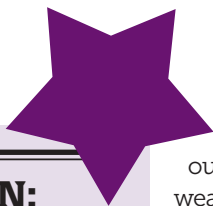
This was that type of work that, in March, convinced National Geographic to team up with Mullen's media shop.

MAKING DOOMSDAY RELEVANT

"Mediahub gave us the rationale and courage to move away from a media strategy that had gone stale," says Courtney Monroe, Chief Marketing Officer at the National Geographic Channel and Nat Geo Wild.

"The strategic thinking [mediahub] brought to the campaign for the second season of ... *Doomsday Preppers*, was a great example of how it integrated our brand into unexpected arenas to create meaningful buzz that would translate to ratings."

To launch season two of the Armageddon-obsessed series, mediahub set out to bring to life



MEDIAHUB/MULLEN: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

Chief Media Officer JOHN MOORE
 SVP and Director of Digital and Social Media . . . SEAN CORCORAN
 SVP and Group Media Director KEITH LUSBY
 SVP and Director of Video Investments at Mullen . . . STEVE KALB
 Cast size 150 (WORLDWIDE)

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients . . . NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNELS, JETBLUE,
 TIMBERLAND, MATCH.COM, BARNES & NOBLE/NOOK

BOX OFFICE

2012 worldwide gross billings of about \$975M

CRITICAL REVIEWS

No matter how big or small the budget, mediahub goes above and beyond to provide the best strategic and creative thinking possible.

AccuWeather outlined potential weather disasters with a fictional weather forecast, urging users to tune in to the show for more info.

To accelerate social sharing, the popular Web site BuzzFeed showcased recipes for the end of the world, and five sponsored cards on Somecards offered a way for users to wish their friends a happy end of the world with an electronic greeting.

"Finally, to capitalize on co-viewing trends," Corcoran adds, "we leveraged

SEEING MEDIA WITH A CAPITAL M

The next step for mediahub is to define what impact really means to its clients, because the goal is not to provide a great flowchart but a great plan, Corcoran insists.

"Finally, and most importantly, we practice what we call 'capital M media,'" he adds. "In other words, we look at digital media holistically rather than in silos of paid, earned and owned.

To do this, mediahub bring its social influence, creative and analytics teams in to develop a communications and optimization plan that outlines its approach to media across content, influencers, social platforms, and devices, as well as the client's Web site and mobile applications.

Beyond new media, "There are many facets to being a successful media company," says Moore. "As consumers become more skilled at throwing out, tuning out and screening out unwanted messages, it takes a different skill set and mindset to succeed. However, it still fundamentally comes down to three dynamics: talent, intelligence and innovation."

"From a strategic and operational standpoint, we did two things," Moore says. "First, we hired a full-time media research person from a competing holding company. It is her job to ensure that we have the best tools and resources, and to also act as our internal expert in extracting intelligence from this data. She is also authoring thought pieces around hot topics like the state of magazines on tablets and TV addressability."

the realities of prepping for the apocalypse, says Sean Corcoran, SVP and Director of Digital and Social Media at the unit.

Food trucks in metropolitan areas like New York and Los Angeles were equipped with "survival elements" to hand out along with tune-in information. Print publications asked readers to volunteer their "must-have" essentials for the end of the world, including playlists in *Rolling Stone*, recipes in *O, The Oprah Magazine*, purse essentials in *Us Weekly* and recordings of the greatest games of all time in *ESPN*.

"In digital, we created original content, including a video featuring the popular YouTube star FPS Russia, educating viewers on the best weaponry to have on hand for the end of the world," Corcoran explains.

A tongue-in-cheek video on

the IntoNow social TV app to capture a photo of the content viewers were currently seeing in the show and add a caption, turning it into a shareable meme."

More broadly, says Monroe: "Mediahub really pushes our thinking and it's not sheepish about telling us the hard stuff, whether we want to hear it or not. As a champion of challenger brands who are outspent by their competitors, mediahub relishes the challenge to help us punch above our weight."

For every one of its clients, mediahub's approach to new media has three components, according to Corcoran.

First, the team looks for that key insight which, in a rapidly changing digital landscape, requires it to dig deeper than the typical standard set of media tools.



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Second, says Moore, mediahub became an official partner with Mediabrands — IPG’s parent media company. The affiliation enabled the shop to tap into all of the IPG media resources and tools and also IPG media resources.

As a result, mediahub now manages over 100 campaigns on an annual basis from more than 20 clients.

For example, mediahub helped JetBlue overcome technological limitations with tagging its Web site in order to more effectively measure media campaigns, while minimizing load time disruptions on the site.

“This is a common problem among brands that heavily rely on e-commerce, so being able to jump that hurdle has been a huge leap forward for our advertising initia-

tives,” says JetBlue’s Borromeo.

And, as if all that weren’t enough, Mullen’s unit devotes significant time and energy to planning for the future.

“One of our biggest [challenges] is predicting the factors that affect our clients’ businesses,” says Lusby. “We do have a core philosophy engrained into the entire department: Mediahub is a place where ideas are created and nurtured to life.

There’s also the matter of attracting, and hanging on to, the best team in the business. “In a business where a very small percentage of media professionals are truly great, finding and holding on to this small faction becomes every manager’s number one priority,” Moore

says, adding that the agency looks for people “who exhibit so much enthusiasm that they would do this job for free. It’s someone who lights up a room and is thinking about the business 24/7.”

“MEDIAHUB RELISHES THE CHALLENGE TO HELP US PUNCH ABOVE OUR WEIGHT.”

COURTENAY MONROE, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

CULTIVATING COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE

The agency’s success, Lusby says, rests on the “right intel.” And Moore believes creating depth around media research continues to be the biggest hurdle. “Intelligence based on the consumer’s relationship with media is vital from both a client perspective and in creating standout media programs.”

“Understanding how consumers make purchase decisions and how they use media

during the process is an age-old problem,” he says. “Less than a decade ago, we had three or four dominant media types and a trusty purchase funnel to guide investment decisions.”

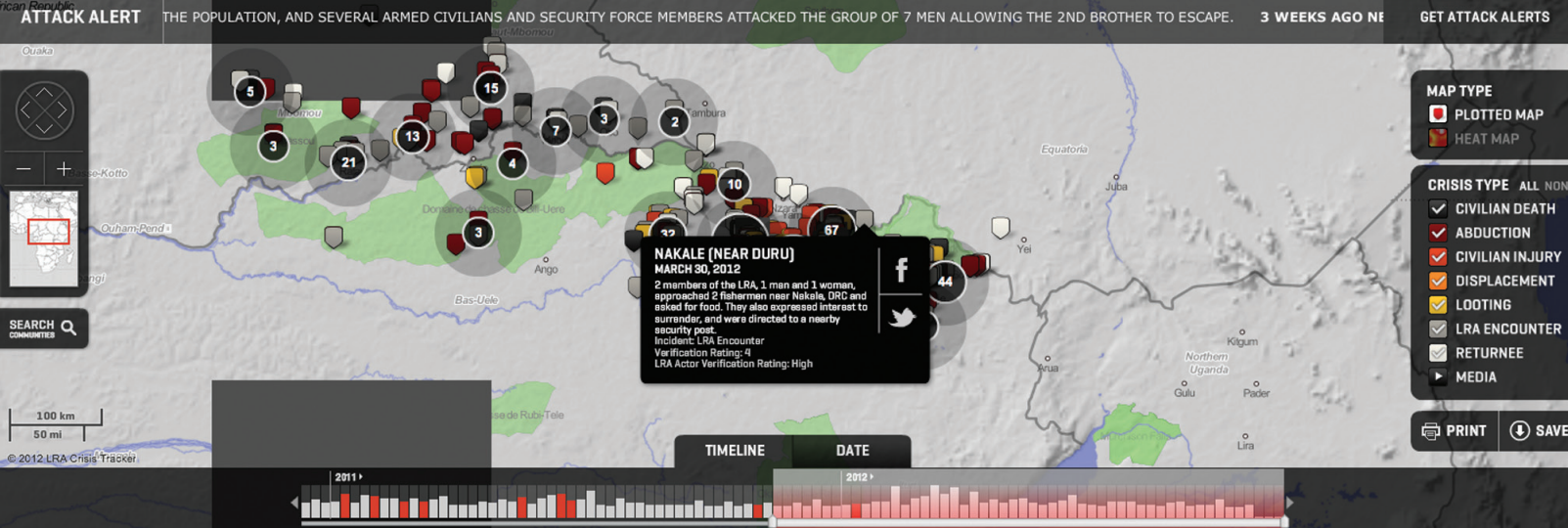
Big changes in technology (such as smartphones now outnumbering feature phones) have given consumers so much control, as have social and other portable real-time channels, “we have essentially eliminated purchase funnels in favor of decision loops,” he says.

On the digital front, mediahub is piloting several new technologies, including one with Adobe that will allow the shop to dynamically serve creative messages based upon historical consumer behavior. It also has an in-house DSP representative from Cadreon, to help mediahub manage its performance-related digital media.

Finally, the shop is investing in a video agnostic investment team, which has provided thought leadership on the new television landscape, which includes everything from Xbox to addressability issues.

Adds Borromeo: “Anyone can build a custom media plan, but mediahub actually builds custom platforms and finds one-of-a-kind media placements that naturally become a part of the consumption habits and interests of the audience. It doesn’t just take a perfunctory approach of looking at reach and frequency numbers. It blends the mathematics with relevance and content in order to find an optimal fit for our advertising campaigns.”





WEST SIDE STORY

By tuning out East Coast chatter and conventional thinking, Digitaria creates digital designs that are as useful as they are beautiful

by Carrie Cummings

Daiga Atvara talks fast, and from her cadence, you just know she is saying something important, so you press the phone hard to your ear, try to block out the Madison Avenue noise outside your window (and in a way, that's just what Madison Avenue is to Atvara – noise) and listen. She's excited, and passionately tells you about design, art, clients and culture, speaking about them in her Latvian accent as if they were one and the same, because to her they are. Though you can see Madison Avenue covered in snow and grime outside your window, if you listen closely enough, you'll soon find yourself transported to the San Diego headquarters of Digitaria, the agency Atvara cofounded some 15 years ago, at which she serves as chief creative director.

In 1997, San Diego wasn't the first place to come to mind when scouting locations in which to establish a world-class digital agency. In fact, it wouldn't even make the list of usual suspects where New York, LA, San Francisco, Chicago and Boston reign supreme and whose markets have traditionally been flooded with fresh raw talent ready to claw its way to the top. But Atvara didn't need claws — she is a towering talent — and it was only natural that when she cofounded Digitaria with current CEO Dan Khabie, the agency would ascend rapidly.

Even simple banner ads can do more: For Rolex, the agency adds working watches



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From its inception, Digitaria has always been design-minded. Of course many digital agencies have good design on the brain, but what makes Digitaria stand out is that their approach to design is nearly indistinguishable from their approach to any other facet of a campaign. Design is just as integral a part of a campaign as, say, storytelling or media placement.

Until late 2010, Digitaria operated as an independent agency with an impressive client roster including GE, Sony and Under Armour. It was acquired by WPP's JWT that September, with the intention of keeping Digitaria independent, while allowing it to solidify its much-deserved reputation as a major force in the digital space.

Digitaria's client roster reads like a who's who of the business world, with clients from the NFL to Experian to Subway, working within a wide range of verticals ranging from sports to luxury to non-profits.

The agency's blockbuster work this year, though, came from two clients that seem to stand in stark opposition to each other — at least where target audience is concerned — Petco and Rolex. The success of these two campaigns is further proof that the agency understands how to captivate any demographic, whether it's tens of millions of pet owners, or the elite who can afford to drop five figures on a watch. For both, the agency's carefully crafted efforts convey the same message: *you need me*.

"The definition of great design is making people care and teaching them something. Whatever makes sense to the people is what should matter," says Atvara. And Digitaria did just that with the campaigns, creating beautiful experiences with which consumers could both identify and interact.

Of course no good design work, or any good work for that matter, gets done without a like-minded set of players all working towards a common goal. And that common goal is what unites Digitaria's tight-knit community of employees. It may be a cliché, but it's a cliché for good reason: At this company, your coworkers are really family — that is, family without the bickering and power plays.

"The employees do a lot together outside work — sports teams, outdoor days, movie screenings, Padres games, holiday parties, bike trips, poker night," explains Sarah Kotlova, group account director, "some of them officially sanctioned and

put together by the agency, some just organized by employees who like each other."

But don't let the fact that employees forge personal relationships and spend time with one another outside of work make you think the work doesn't always come first.

"Digitaria is collaborative and people work very hard here when we're under the gun, but they also know how to let go when things aren't as tight," Kotlova assures.

NURTURING ITS CALIFORNIA VIBE

Maybe the Southern California sun is responsible for softening the edges of Digitaria's work style, or perhaps more laid-back creatives are drawn to the area. No matter the reason, it's clear that Digitaria's San Diego location has shaped the company's culture.

"What does it mean that we are from here?" Atvara ponders, "We have the West Coast mentality. We have this pioneering spirit of doing things in an exploratory way. San Diego forced us to be pioneers. The tech drive — there is something unknown here that hasn't been discovered, yet that shapes us. It makes us think unconventionally — to survive and make us who we are."

It's that mentality that also shapes Digitaria on a more tangible level with regards to day-to-day operations.

"Digitaria is a very entrepreneurial company. Once you prove you know what you're doing," Kotlova says, "you get a lot of leeway and freedom. It's a very SoCal place, people are laid back but coolly confident, and egomaniacs don't last long here."

Digitaria's approach to storytelling also reflects their unconventional culture. For Atvara and team, campaigns should be about the consumer's needs. And when you think about it, it seems logical that an agency would rather tell a story that consumers want to hear rather than forcing a narrative.

"We need to figure out what people want," Atvara explains, "Making things people want is bigger than making people want things. We go from there and make relevance around it. Experience design will become more and more relevant."

It's not surprising that a different approach to campaigns arises from creating things people

"WHAT IS THE POINT OF DESIGN? TO MAKE THE USABLE PRODUCT BEAUTIFUL"
DAIGA ATVARA

DIGITARIA: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

CEO DAN KHABIE
 Chief Creative Director DAIGA ATVARA
 Cast size 225

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients INVISIBLE CHILDREN, ROYAL CARIBBEAN, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE, ROLEX

BOX OFFICE

OMMA estimates 2012 billings of \$30M

CRITICAL REVIEWS

Design done right makes clients and the industry take note

want. But, what people want the most, Digitaria has found, is great storytelling, even if that means thinking about the media and strategy later.

"We have a hard time working in the traditional sense: 'here is our media strategy, banners, then storytelling,'" says Atvara, "For us, the media comes after the storytelling."

THE POWER OF DOING IT ALL IN-HOUSE

This approach to storytelling first isn't hard to accomplish at Digitaria, given that all work is done in-house at this full service agency. "We produce almost everything in-house," says Kotlova. "When that happens, inspiration can become a product itself — the idea is overseen to fruition by the very people who designed it. That's very rare in the business. And it's the biggest selling point for Digitaria. Our tech department can make the ideas our creative department comes up with a reality."

Armed with one of the strongest in-house production teams in the industry, Digitaria is able to take on a wide range of clients, and even bring some back into the fold, as was the case when Petco recently approached the agency.

"Petco was one of Digitaria's earliest clients, but we had parted several years ago," says Kotlova, "The agency's recent run of good creative, however, brought them back into our orbit, and our creative for Petco has earned all sorts of kudos for 'bringing

AGENCY OF THE YEAR

Bertha

Speed

Capacity

Handling

choose

Digitaria is injecting fun and games into Petco's message

top players

Nick Batcheller	\$1024.02	50 Reward Dollars
Michael McKibben	\$983.15	45 Reward Dollars
Nick Batcheller	\$968.25	45 Reward Dollars
Jackie Mars	\$960.30	45 Reward Dollars
Oliver Duncan	\$944.60	45 Reward Dollars
Jackie Mars	\$943.56	45 Reward Dollars
Oliver Duncan	\$942.93	45 Reward Dollars
Michael McKibben	\$938.21	45 Reward Dollars

the fun back' in their digital communications, via gameification and more playful digital work."

"You can't learn anything if you don't ask why we are doing this and what does it mean," Atvara says. "Petco made us think differently."

It wasn't just Petco that noticed Digitaria's solid creative design work. Luxury watchmaker Rolex took note and, in turn, came knocking. For Rolex, Digitaria brought the luxury brand into the digital age.

"Rolex has been a blockbuster for us, and we've made great strides invigorating their digital creative, to the point that some of our digital has now crossed over into print advertising as well," says Kotlova.

"Before it started working with Digitaria, Rolex thought digital marketing seemed too transitory for the luxury brand, but we've managed to bring the luxury of creative craft to the brand's digital work — even in a simple thing like a banner ad, we have added working watches, which tell time," says Kotlova.

Atvara's thoughts on digital design come from a very practical standpoint, as always, and rely on people — the consumers — as the focus: "It's almost product development thinking when you do design in digital. How do you want people to use it in the end? Even on the campaign level, it's important to think that way." The automatic watches' iconic sweeping second hands dovetail nicely into Atvara's views. Spark some creativity and nostalgia, an experience, if you will, but make it useful. Always make it useful.

Atvara puts it more simply: "What is the point of design? To make the usable product beautiful."

"Our goal has been to create immersive experiences, like the banner ad and the Rolex YouTube channel, which is designed to be a brand experience, not just a collection of videos," notes Kotlova.

With Digitaria's triumphant foray into the luxury

space, the agency proved that it could successfully tackle, and make profitable, any vertical it delved into.


One of Digitaria's most widely celebrated campaigns this year was for Invisible Children. Remember Kony 2012? Digitaria made a huge splash with the initiative, and the award-winning LRA Crisis Tracker was applauded throughout the industry.

After the world saw this campaign change lives, Digitaria realized it needed to hone in on its central branding, tightening and strengthening the message. Though the media uproar may have softened, Digitaria is still as invested as ever in the message.

"We continue working with Invisible Children and defining their work and narrowing who they are," says Atvara. She notes that non-profit work also serves to empower the agency's employees: "[Non-profit work is] more creative and also anchors [our staff] mentally to give a perspective of how incredibly powerful knowledge is — that our knowledge on how to sell shoes can make a real difference in the world. That's empowering to our employees. They allow us to be more innovative. We pledge to have two non-profits a year. We are forced to be creative with very limited budgets."

As for Digitaria's future, Atvara has big plans. "This year has been about really innovative marketing work and entering luxury markets," she says. Next year, though, will be about "diversifying in any sense. In all the verticals — luxury, auto. Another thing is we want to grow bigger in all aspects — to grow out of the space. We want insights into what that means in the markets. As a service, we want to diversify so we have a really diverse view of problems we solve. Really embracing different problems and bringing truth with technology."

Consider this from Digitaria's Web site: "The Digitaria brand was named after a star that nobody knew existed because its light reflected upon another star to make it appear shining and twinkling more brightly."

Down on Madison Avenue the horns honk as the traffic picks up, and the ad men and women, bundled in wool and cashmere, file out of their offices and into buses, taxis and subways and vanish into the East Coast ether. But look west. Conjure up some childhood wonder and imagination. Look at the light from the setting sun. Imagine that light is being reflected east by a team in San Diego, still hard at work, with entirely different dreams. 

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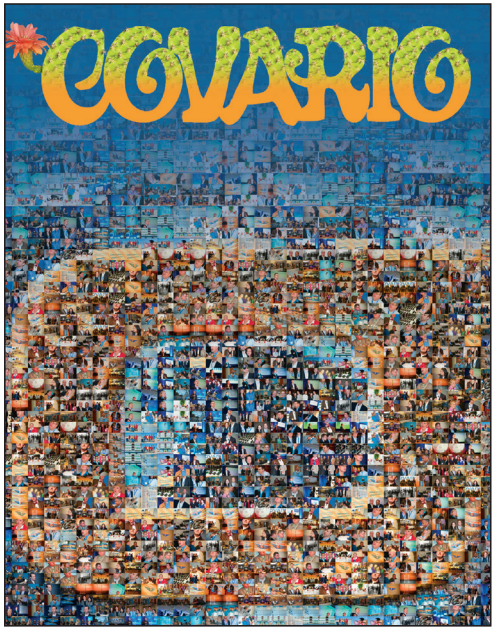
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AGENCY OF THE YEAR

BRONZE: SEARCH



CACTUS FLOWER

San Diego-based Covario's commitment to clients results in increases in traffic, conversion rates and sales. But what really sets it apart? Eclectic thinking.

by Laurie Sullivan

The elevator doors open to a white and orange Covario sign painted on the wall. It ties into the company's latest branding campaign sporting an image on its Web site home page of a white-haired Einstein with an orange streak, symbolizing intelligence with a twist.

A few steps into the reception area and the space takes on a high-tech, real-time agency feel: The open ceiling reveals the building's plumbing, which Covario founder and CEO Russ Mann says represents the inner workings of the Internet. A short walk down the hallway and into his office reveals a standup desk and small round conference table with a few chairs. The Harvard Business School graduate is quick to weave similes and alternate meaning from words.

The name Covario comes from the "covariance" theory, a measure of how random

variables change and relate to others. It reflects the company's focus on paid and organic search, from desktop to mobile.

Mann once described the word — *Covario* — as the variability of two independent data streams. "It's sort of like calculus, changing over time," he says. "If you really want to geek out remember the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principal, which suggests light is both a particle and a wave, but you don't know which until you look."

Talk with Mann about the name change and he likens it to the Heisenberg principal, suggesting marketers can assess

and understand the worth of a campaign, how it co-varies, but not both simultaneously. By 2008, that ideology had attracted \$21.5 million in investments from Dubilier & Company, FT Capital, Voyager Capital and others.

THE PROOF'S IN THE PUDDING

Covario, an independent stand-alone agency headquartered in San Diego, Calif., continues to evolve into a truly global search firm. About 79 percent of its customers have campaigns running worldwide. When asked about his role in driving up sales for clients, Mann points to employees and refers to it as a team effort.

Mann leads about 200 employees and another 40 partners in China and around the world. Overall, company experts and technology support

more than 70 *Fortune* 500 and *Internet* 1000 advertisers, representing about 1,000 brands and Web sites, including IBM, Intel, Nikon, Sony Pictures, T-Mobile, Cabela's, and Guthy-Renker from offices in Chicago, London, Beijing, Tokyo, Singapore, Toronto, and Sao Paulo.

The company generates about \$100 million in gross billings, Mann says. Revenue grew 25 percent in 2012, while the advertising industry slowed to 6 percent; and search, 17 percent. The firm not only helps itself, but also clients. Guthy-Renker experienced a 259 percent rise in paid search conversions, and Samsung drew 4.4 million new Web site visitors.

Covario and Guthy-Renker worked closely to restructure and cut costs for the Proactiv paid search program. The campaign drove up Web site visits, adding incremental results beyond what television did. The non-brand campaigns yielded a 15 percent year-over-year increase in traffic, 213 percent increase in conversion rate and 42 percent drop in cost-per-order.

For Samsung, Covario created 4.4 million organic visitors since the campaign launch. Additionally, Samsung and Covario were able to increase total traffic by 43 percent and organic traffic by 227 percent during the holiday season. The company wanted to increase visibility in Google search results for brand and non-

branded terms, and improve the experience for site visitors.

Among other strategies, Covario recommended adding 23 branded new sub-category pages that were included in the navigational structure of the site. The company created an evergreen Black Friday page to capture more generic holiday-specific traffic.

The Black Friday page drove more than 400,000 Facebook shares during the 2011 holiday season. The new sub-category pages drove 4.4 million visitors. Site visitors during the 2011 holiday season rose 227 percent, year-over-year.

Samsung isn't the only company seeing better results. In October 2011, SolarCity had trouble ranking well for non-branded terms, though they had adequate rankings for branded terms. The goal to drive additional Web site traffic, generate higher qualified leads, and become the proximate name on page one rankings for terms like "solar panels" led the company to work with Covario.

Covario drove a 120 percent increase in non-branded organic traffic month-over-month for SolarCity, up 275 percent in non-branded organic traffic year-over-year, 200 percent increase in top-10 rankings, and managed to achieve and maintain position No. 4 for "solar panel" in Google search engine rankings for the past three months, contributing to a more than 8,000 percent increase in traffic.

Proving results for its clients, Covario took the San Diego's 2010 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year in the Emerging Business category. The company has also won numerous MediaPost OMMA awards, along with nods from Forrester and many industry publications.

This year, it launched a Creative Services team specializing in the design and multivariate testing of paid and SEO campaign landing pages and micro-sites, which has experienced over 500 percent revenue growth.



From comedians to bull riders to life coaches, Covario credits its unusual mix of employees with its fresh insights

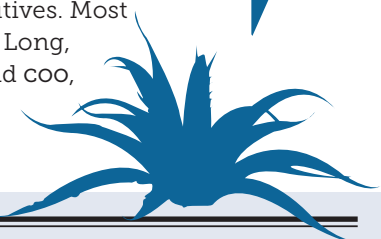
The team develops intelligent page designs and modular page layouts with testing, optimization and content targeting in mind.

Personas are developed and mapped to specific attribution paths. Along with A/B and multivariate testing (MVT), Covario analysts align campaign ad copy with landing page content to optimize performance and conversions. Campaign conversion rate performance improvements range from 12 percent to more than 60 percent.

DIVERSITY & SUCCESS

The company's philosophy continues to attract an eclectic and diverse group of executives. Most recently Claire Long, Covario CFO and COO, from the *San Diego Union*

GULLAKSEN MUSCLES UP AT THE GYM, KEEPS A FLOP-EARED BUNNY AT HOME, AND SERVES ON THE BOARD OF SEMPO.



COVARIO: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

CEO	RUSS MANN
COO/CFO	CLAIRE LONG
SVP	JEFF JOHNSON
Cast size	200

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients INTEL, SAMSUNG, GUTHY-RENKER

BOX OFFICE

Worldwide billings of \$100M

CRITICAL REVIEWS

From desktop to mobile, Covario leads on paid and organic search

Tribune, where she was responsible for the publisher's finance, accounting and treasury.

Diversity also led former iCrossing search experts Jeff Johnson, NASCAR aficionado and former amateur bull rider, and Mike Gullaksen to join Covario in 2009, becoming co-managing directors and senior VPs. Recently named among the *Direct Marketing News* "40 Under 40" group of the nation's top young marketers, Gullaksen muscles up at the gym, keeps a flop-eared bunny at home, and serves on the Board of SEMPO.

The two started the agency group in Phoenix about four years ago and attracted folks like Chicago-based Matt Kropp, VP of domestic client strategies and solutions, an amateur comedian who trained with Second City TV.

Former Mediacom exec LuRae Lumpkin, VP of global paid media services and certified life coach, and Jeff MacGurn, VP of earned media, also recently joined the agency group.

Under Mann's direction, Covario continues to attain awards and patents. The U.S. Patent and Trademark Office awarded Covario an SEO patent for its algorithmic weighting system in December 2011. The Covario SEO Audit

Score system analyzes the properties of a Web site to optimize search engine result listings on one or more engines.

Early in 2012, Covario spun out Rio SEO, a business unit focused on technology platforms. The name comes from "rio" in Covario or the "river of content" that supports "SEO" services through automation. Along with the name came an emerging vocabulary SEO Lo Mo So, or search engine optimization for local mobile social campaigns.

Rio SEO focuses on SEO, social and content marketing automation tools. About 40 percent of the retail traffic from the clients comes from mobile.

Covario acquired Madison, Wis.-based Netconcepts, founded by Stephan Spencer and Nigel Varcoe, in January 2010 to strengthen its SEO offerings, followed by San Diego-based Top Local Search (TLS) in June 2012. The company hired three of five TLS employees, including founder and CEO Bill Connard.

Chris Reid joined as senior vice president and the first operating head of the Rio SEO software tools business. Around the same time, Forrester Research named Rio SEO "The Only Leader" in its Forrester Wave: SEO Platforms, Q4 2012.



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GREEN

AN AMERICAN RIVERS INITIATIVE



American Rivers

**AGENCY
OF THE YEAR**
BRONZE: SMALL AGENCY



STOMP

Matt Jarvis wants you to know that his agency doesn't consider itself small. In fact, as the partner and creative strategy director points out, clients certainly don't think Los Angeles-based 72andSunny is small. And in a way, he's right: With 300 people, the eight-year-old agency may not be as large as JWT or Havas. But trust us — you've seen plenty of 72andSunny's work. And you've probably liked it.

If the release of the iPhone 5 made you consider switching to Samsung's sleek Galaxy S III phone, you probably have 72andSunny to thank, or blame. When Apple announced the launch date of its much-anticipated iPhone 5 back in September, Samsung was there on the offense. Instead of accepting a spot behind the most

popular mobile phone, like most manufacturers would, Samsung enlisted 72andSunny to come up with creative assaults before the launch. The much-buzzed about spots were a coup for the already-on-the-map agency.

"At the core of the 72andSunny proposition, there are a couple of ideas. One of them is

72ANDSUNNY: CAST & CREDITS

STARRING

President JOHN BOILER
 Chief Creative Officer GLENN COLE
 Design Director ROBERT NAKATA
 Chief Strategy Officer MATT JARVIS
 Cast size ABOUT 300

ALSO FEATURING

Star Clients SAMSUNG, CARL'S JR, SONOS, XBOX 360,
 NIKE, BENNETON, DISCOVERY CHANNEL

CRITICAL REVIEWS

To stay relevant, create work that cannot be ignored



With its choreographed percussion of brilliant ideas and precise execution, 72andSunny gets more attention than agencies 10 times its size **by Carrie Cummings**

that our mission is to help our clients' brands matter in culture," says Jarvis. "We believe that we are in this era where the people we connect with have an incredible amount of power. They can certainly tune us out, or they can lean forward and navigate on behalf of the brands that we are connecting them with in meaningful ways."

"A highlight this year has been the Samsung 'Next Big Thing' campaign which has been really successful on a cultural level and has also yielded incredible results in the marketplace," boasts Jarvis.


The agency has also been instrumental in the *Call of Duty* franchise, most recently with a yearlong push for the *Black Ops 2* release.

"We have a great challenge with that brand with topping last year's work," explains Jarvis. "Every year that franchise sets a new record with a new entertainment launch."

72andSunny is also making great strides with other big brands: Its Unhate campaign for Benetton, which creepily faked President Obama kissing Hugo

Chavez, won big at Cannes. With all the work coming in, it's only natural that 72andSunny would see the need to grow. The expansion to Amsterdam didn't mean a change in name, although it's almost never 72 degrees and rarely sunny in the Dutch city. That doesn't matter one bit: It's the attitude of the agency that is always 72 and sunny, not the weather.

"At 72andSunny, we're a 'Culture first' organization," says Jarvis. "We judge ourselves by the vibrancy of our culture, so that has been the main focus of this year."

But, in the end, says Jarvis, it's all about the people who make this small agency tick, fueled by agency-provided beer and BBQs: "We don't believe that individuals make good work. We believe that culture and organization make great work." 



"THEY CAN CERTAINLY TUNE US OUT, OR THEY CAN LEAN FORWARD AND NAVIGATE ON BEHALF OF THE BRANDS THAT WE ARE CONNECTING THEM WITH IN MEANINGFUL WAYS."
MATT JARVIS

PRESIDENT OF THE USA

OMMA ENVY

Some campaigns are bound to bring out the green-eyed monster. Seven original thinkers tell *OMMA* about the year's ads that made them say, "Wish I'd thought of that."



Wish I'd thought of... **Nike's Tweetboard**



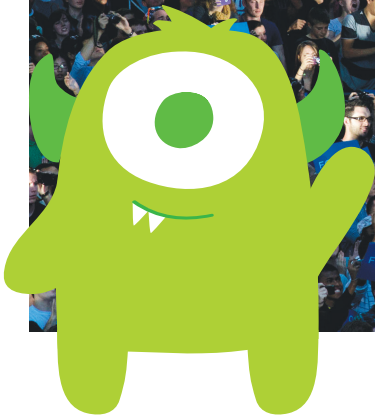
Alan Siegel
*Founder,
Siegelvision*

In our day consumers have been exposed to many admirable advertising campaigns, including some that sparkle with inventiveness and wit. The

challenge for today's marketers, though, is not to broadcast and entertain but to engage.

To me, the most impressive branding program is Nike's, which builds on spectacular advertising of years past while moving with authority into the frontiers of consumer engagement.

Nike has shifted out of traditional media into various engagement channels—using



such imaginative techniques as design-your-own products.

Nike has steadily emphasized the theme of helping customers become better athletes. The company has used digital relationship tools, supplemented by selected advertising at events like the Olympics and March Madness. Nike spreads their media investment across all channels and forged partnerships with Facebook and Twitter. The company debuts ads that normally would have run on tv on YouTube and Facebook — and recently created a 30-story digital billboard displaying tweets from fans.

What's the point? Nike gets into conversations with people who care about athletic activity. Its bloggers and Tweeters are not afraid to interject themselves into the conversation.

Best of all — completely in the spirit of the brand — Nike speaks with an assertive point of view.

Wish I'd thought of ... **President Barack Obama's Forward Campaign**



Laura Ries
*Co-founder,
Ries & Ries*

Selling Obama in 2012 wasn't going to be easy. Incumbents can't run on change or hope, they have to run on their records. And with a still-suffering economy and gridlock in Washington Obama didn't have a lot of success or jobs to boast about.

But with one brilliant word, Obama made his case. His "Forward" slogan did what most slogans do not. It cut both ways. It said something positive about his brand while also saying something negative about the competition. That's tough to do. Obama set up the election as a choice between going forward with him or going backwards with Romney. Romney coun-

tered with "Believe in America." That slogan implies that Obama doesn't believe in America. Obama spent four years as President and doesn't believe in America? Makes no sense.

The final and not insignificant touch was incorporating Obama's powerful visual from 2008 right into the slogan itself. He couldn't say "hope" but that visual did. Pure genius. Wish I had thought of it.

Wish I'd thought of...

Jennifer Aniston for Smartwater



Peter Dixon
*Creative Director,
Prophet*

A little over a year ago, Smartwater did something really fun. Using

spokesperson Jennifer Aniston, who had appeared in videos and ads before, it made a viral video "Like A G6 (With Me and Jennifer Aniston) Smartwater Viral." It kicks off with viral video kid Keenan Cahill lip-synching and then launches into a parody of making a viral video. It received millions of hits and





aside from the brilliance of getting her to endorse the product as the perfect spokesperson—wholesome, hot, sophisticated, but cool—it launched through the medium everyone loves seeing her in (video) first in a very cheeky and viral way. It was a big success which they followed up with a few more videos, dedicated online channels/pages, print advertising, etc. I like that it started online and traveled to print. It was very on-brand for them and beautifully executed.

Wish I'd thought of...
Expedia's Find your Understanding



Theo Fanning
Creative Director, Traction

What we do is very simple: Tell a story. Make a connection. Do it unexpectedly. This Expedia spot does it all. It tells the story of a father traveling to his daughter's wedding: a lesbian wedding—a wedding that he doesn't know if he approves of. The spot takes us on his jour-

ney, both physically and emotionally. It shares his dreams, his fears, his reality. We travel with him and feel his apprehension and trepidation. We empathize with him. And when he arrives at both his destination and his decision—we share in his relief, satisfaction, and joy.

We, as the viewers, have been allowed to walk a few miles in this man's shoes. When the words "Find your understanding" appears on the screen we all feel like Expedia is more than just a travel company — it's a journey company. And It doesn't feel like a gimmick. This is storytelling at its finest. And I really wish I had done this campaign.

Wish I'd thought of...

Amnesty International's Independence



Mathew Childs
SVP/Experience and insights GSD&M
 The Amnesty International ad titled "Inde-

pendence," done by TBWA France, is one of the most chilling and effective ads I've seen. Period. It very graphically depicts the abuses that wealth hides around the world. I don't think U.S. audiences would ever stomach the realities of it but the sheer visceral reaction to the ad and the message cannot be hidden. The music and serenity of the film direction provide an almost eerie contrast to the violent visuals of one type of torture after another. And of course, implicate the viewer as complicit by simply watching and doing nothing. Very brave campaign.

The shock of it has probably affected those that have seen it and left a weird silence in its wake.





Wish I'd thought of...
Coke Zero's 'Unlock the 007 in you'



Joeri Van den Bergh
Founder, InSites Consulting; author of "How Cool Brands Stay Hot. Branding to Generation Y"
 Recently an

awful lot has been written about gamifying marketing actions. To get the attention of our target groups, we can't count on merely paying for their attention by buying media space anymore, but should rather get their engagement by making them more involved with our marketing. It's all about touching their hearts. Adding challenges and gaming techniques seems to be a good way — learned from positive psychology — to get consumers into this positive state of flow. I like Coke Zero's "Unlock the 007 in You," related to the brand's association with the new James Bond *Skyfall* franchise.

Instead of giving away tickets, Coke Zero created a challenge in a train station in Antwerp, in which ordinary

travelers were required to go to a certain platform in 70 seconds. On their way, participants were confronted with different types of obstacles, like joggers, a woman with dogs on a leash, a girl calling them by name, and a man offering roses. When they arrived at the platform, they had to sing the famous James Bond tune to get their tickets for the movie.

Coke really paid a lot of attention to keeping its message consistent over different touch points: the cinema commercial was about an ordinary boy and girl in an unnamed city experiencing a James Bond moment culminating in sharing a Coke Zero.

In theatres, Coke allowed the audience to get a digital picture in a James Bond setting including Bond girls and props. As Coke Zero is a very male and macho brand, there's a tight link between James Bond and the brand's DNA making is consistent and authentic. The challenge in the little station game immediately went viral with now more than 8.5 million views in only a few weeks time.


Wish I'd thought of...
Kraft's Rainbow Oreo



Bob Witeck
President, Witeck Communications

I admire marketers willing to take smart risks to reap over-sized rewards. Especially with a simple iconic image like the Oreo.

Kraft Foods dolled up the popular Oreo by splashing it with an LGBT-friendly rainbow during June pride season, and wooed an enviable bounty of adoring fans and customers. This creative visual, so simple, low-cost and easy to execute, metastasized into a giant harvest of impressions and earned media that they could never afford to buy.

Did it rub some the wrong way? Did this suggest Kraft has taken sides in the so-called "culture wars?" Chattering heads sometimes painted it that way. However, for the century old food company, that modest risk made little difference compared with the way it resonated especially with younger audiences who are impressed when conventional brands think outside the box. 



The Worst Videos OF 2012

It was a year of amazing work, and unsurpassed video consumption, with consumers snacking on video via phone, tablet and laptop. Not all are stellar. Here are 10 the universe should spit out. **by Larry Dobrow**

YOU'D THINK THAT BRAND MAVENS AND MARKETERS WOULD HAVE REALIZED BY NOW THAT EVERY PIECE OF CONTENT IS, OR WILL SOON BE, VIRAL. With the exception of those who have taken a monastic vow to avoid all online video, most of us are seeing as many brand videos and ads online as we are off.

There are exceptions — those ubiquitous holiday-time auto ads remain more or less native to the TV set — but beyond that, it's all viral, all the time. As a result, brands risk self-inflicting deep wounds if they fail to understand how their content moves through the world.

Fortunately for me — I write MediaPost's twice-weekly *Video Critique* newsletter, which is everything its name suggests and yet so, so, so much more — most brands continue to drop mockable video turds on our e-doorstep with abandon. Here, then, in no particular order, are my picks for the ten dopiast, dumbest, least coherent and/or most wackadoodle brand and marketing videos of 2012. Lord knows there wasn't any shortage of candidates.

GILLETTE

Actual Video Name: "MASTERS OF STYLE"

Should-be Video Name: "MASTERS OF INARTICULATE EXPRESSION OF STYLE"

The ads for the ProGlide styler, Gillette's up-market electro-shaving doohickey, feature actors Adrien Brody and Gael Garcia Bernal wandering about in some vaguely hipster-urban setting. There, they convene with musician/actor/hyphenate André "André 3000" Benjamin and do their part to raise awareness of... I guess one would call it "matters relating to precision-honed facial hair."

For the Web, however, Gillette loosed each of the three to weigh in on matters relating to personal style. Actor/entertainer types working without a script? Bad idea.

Brody's is the most shallow of the monologues, which is no small feat. Answering questions nobody asked ("What does authenticity mean to you?"), he responds with true him-bo vigor, in the process restoring stereotypes about entertainer intelligence erased years ago by cerebral thinkers like Burt Reynolds and Charo.

MACY'S

Actual: "ANOTHER MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET"

Should-be: "ANOTHER BASTARDIZATION OF A CINEMATIC TOUCHSTONE"

You can't blame Macy's for latching itself, barnacle-style, onto *Miracle on 34th Street* every holiday season. After all these years, the movie remains blithe and as uplifting as a neoprene sports bra, the single most effective retail product placement (unpaid, I presume) in the history of celluloid. Macy's has coasted on its tails for years.

But using the megamagic of supertechnology to turbo-splice clips from the flick into a modern-day setting, then cyberramming its Kringle into pithy conversations with over-exposed celebrities (Justin Bieber, Martha Stewart and Taylor Swift, among others), is precisely the wrong way to extend its legacy. Also, the clip officially hit the Web in October, a few weeks before one of its not-as-self-aware-as-he-thinks stars, Donald Trump, officially became odious to a significant slice of the population. Lesson learned: four weeks is a long time in the everything-is-somehow-viral era.





WHAT DOES AUTHENTICITY
MEAN TO YOU?

According to Brody, authenticity “really refers to being sincere and honest with yourself... not necessarily being swayed by everyone’s opinion.” In other words, authenticity refers to the state and/or act of being authentic. Who needs a thesaurus when you’ve got a thespian?

CHANEL NO. 5

Actual: “THERE YOU ARE”

Should-be: “BRAD PITT RECITES MARLON BRANDO’S APOCALYPSE NOW OUTTAKES”

In his viral-bait spots for Chanel No. 5, Brad Pitt gazes vacantly towards the camera and talks. He talks about journeys and dreams. He talks about fortune and inevitability. Then the camera pulls back and we learn that we’re supposed to be buying/feeling good about... perfume? Really? Smart money was on an exotic vacation locale or some kind of celebrity quasi-religion. Perfume. Huh.

The problem with “There You Are” isn’t Chanel’s approach; the brand has long trafficked in the kind of mumbo jumbo that, according to no focus groups, enhances its allure and mystique. The problem is that by choosing Brad Pitt as its first-ever spokesperson, Chanel calls attention to itself in a way that can’t be ignored. But Pitt’s presence ensures that we’ll all pay attention — in this case, not a desired outcome.



Actual: “JOIN OUR GLOBAL CHEER”

Should-be: “SCENES OF PEOPLE CHEERING, ACCOMPANIED BY NARRATION ABOUT HOW PEOPLE LIKE TO CHEER AND HOW CHEERING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA IS LIKE OCTUPLE-CHEERING”

Visa’s “Global Cheer” Olympics campaign starts with a flawed premise — that enjoyment of the Summer Olympic games will be amplified by simultaneous enjoyment of the social media swirling over, under and around it — and sinks from there. It may have gravitas, courtesy of Morgan Freeman’s ever-solemn narration, but the clips designed to familiarize with already familiar athletes (Michael Phelps) reek of desperation, à la “we hitched our wagon to these guys/gals. If we’re going down, you’re coming with us.”

The “Join Our Global Cheer”

spot may or may not have been an official Visa production, but its gauzy PR-speak about “harnessing the Olympic spirit into a global movement” makes it feel lighter than air. It takes a full 90 seconds to convey a simple concept that I can get across in eight seconds — hell, time me. “Please go to our Facebook page, please, and create content, so that we don’t have to.” Meanwhile, to hear the campaign tell it, remotely cyber-cheering for Malaysian track cyclist/dreamy dreamboat Azizul Awang is the next best thing to serving as Best Man at his wedding. Good to know.



FACEBOOK

Actual: "THE THINGS THAT CONNECT US"

Should-be: "CHAIRS ARE PEOPLE, TOO!"

I don't think anybody had any idea what to expect from Facebook's first-ever superclip, envisioned as yet another front in the Grand Exalted Social-Media Overlord's battle to humanize itself. It could

have featured an all-oboe orchestra or animated stop-motion chipmunks or children holding hands and dancing and going la la la. It could have featured Bono talking about technology infrastructure in Africa. Nothing would have surprised me.

And then I heard the following phrase, which prompted me to scroll back to the start of the clip and make sure I'd heard it correctly: "Chairs are for people — and that is why chairs are like Facebook." Apparently the thing that connects us, as much as technology or transportation or yenta relatives, is chairs. Recliners, thrones, fauteuils, beanbags, you name it — only through, on, across or alongside chairs can we find common emotional ground. But, the video adds, dance floors and doorbells are a little like chairs, and thus Facebook, because they too have connective properties.

I hate my job.



CHAIRS
ARE
LIKE
FACEBOOK



THE NEW YORKER

Actual: "LENA DUNHAM INTRODUCES THE NEW YORKER IPHONE APP"

Should-be: "LENA DUNHAM INTRODUCES THE NEW YORKER IPHONE APP" (nailed it!)

For the most part, brand videos go the big-tent route: all comers are welcome, so long as you've got cash to spend or an itchy "like" trigger finger on Facebook. But Dunham's efforts on behalf of the *New Yorker* iPhone app,

in which she jousts with uninterested talk-show host Jon Hamm and debuts a clip from her "new movie" (which features more straightforward discussion of the *New Yorker* app than does, say, *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*), seems designed to alienate, annoy or otherwise baffle a huge chunk of its potential audience.

It's a strategy that makes no sense in the real world, but even less sense on the everyone-everywhere-everything web. Yes, we get that the clip is a meta-commentary on the type of clips usually employed to introduce such products. But do we really need to bury the wit beneath a heap of smirks and air quotes? Would an easy, airy punchline do profound danger to the brand? Lighten up, missy.

Separately, has anyone told Jon Hamm that he's allowed to say no every so often?

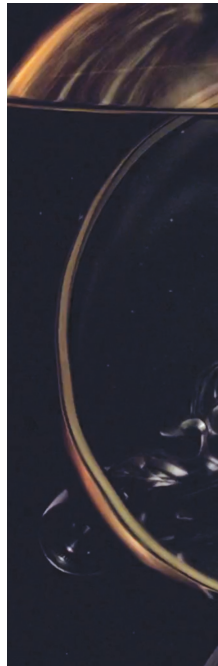
PERRIER

Actual: "THE DROP"

Should-be: "LONE BEAD OF FLUID DEFIES PHYSICS AND SAVES UNIVERSE"

Whenever a brand manager proclaims, "I want something... cinematic! Yes, cinematic!," unintentional hilarity is soon to follow. And so it goes with Perrier's "The Drop," a high-concept nugget o' brand goodness in which Perrier's refreshervescenceness saves the world.

How, you ask? Well, see, there's this supersonic heat wave that's totally melting everybody's wax. So the Powers That Be combat it the only way they know how: By belting a supermodel cosmonaut into a pod and launching her into space, with a Perrier as her only cargo. The idea is that she'll bend the laws of chemistry and not burst into flames upon reaching her destination, then destroy the



CARTIER

Actual: "PAINTED LOVE"

Should-be: "TORTURED BEARDED ARTIST GUY FALLS IN LOVE WITH GIRL IN HIS PAINTING, WHO COMES TO LIFE IN AN ANIMATED-SPRITE KIND OF WAY; AND THEN, IN THE WORLD'S MOST TRANSPARENT





sun by pouring Perrier on it.

But wait — she's thirsty! And so, as the sweaty denizens of Planet Earth watch aghast (via webcam? This part isn't entirely clear), she chugs the entire bottle. Fortunately for everyone's sake, the model is a drooler, and a single drop of Perrier tumbles off her oh-so-pert lower lip and extinguishes the threat. The end.

Now, what was it that I was supposed to buy, and what are its brand attributes?

'MUSE' METAPHOR, HE CHASES HER/IT AROUND TOWN AND, FINALLY, BACK HOME, WHERE-UPON HE IS PULLED INTO THE PAINTING AND GOES SMOOCHY-SWIMMING WITH THE ANIMATED-SPRITE PAINTING GIRL'

It's a brand video, people. It's not *Fellini Satyricon*.



EIGHT O'CLOCK COFFEE

Actual: "THE CUPPING ROOM"

Should-be: "GRANDPA BRAND TRIES TO ACT YOUNG, BREAKS HIP"

I believe in kindness, charity and decency towards my fellow man and woman, especially those in need. That's why I refuse to say anything critical about Eight O'Clock Coffee's attempt to join the 21st century via one of those "Internet videos" its musty brand people had been hearing so much about.

I won't rip the one-note bit drawn out over five minutes (competitive eater visits coffee brand's "cupping room" and — get this — starts drinking all the coffee and eating all the coffee beans!) I won't scold the creators for failing to arm the actors with a script or anything beyond minimalist props. I won't mock the lighting director for keeping his charges in the shadows, literally.

I won't go there. That's not how I roll.



H&M/ANNA DELLO RUSSO

Actual: "FASHION SHOWER"

Should-be: "CAMPY FASHION LADY MAKES ME FEAR FOR MY SAFETY AND THE SAFETY OF THOSE I LOVE"

The clips I watch as part of my "Video Critique" duties sometimes delight me. More often, they bemuse or sadden me. But only once did a clip outright terrify me — and that once was when I screened H&M's "Fashion Shower," starring designer Anna Dello Russo as a fashion guru-cum-provocateur-cum-overcaffeinated loon.

In it, she announces that the viewer needs a fashion shower, which is less about hygiene than it is about the donning of/cavorting with accessories like oversized novelty scissors. As she prances, she ticks off her list of fashion lessons, among them that "wearing night clothes in the daytime is unexpected."

I happen to agree, but that's not the point. There are many, many reasons to create a viral-minded clip, among them

awareness and brand definition and blah blah. But something this over the top only appeals to true believers. If that happened to be Dello Russo's only goal, mission accomplished. Really, all she did here was affirm her nutjob bona fides. She could've done that without blowing thousands of dollars on that mountain of a straddleable gold shoe. ☑



TOP 50 U.S. DIGITAL AGENCIES OF 2012

COURTESY OF DARD@RECMA

Agency	Group / Owner	Staff	Agency	Group / Owner	Staff
1. Digitas	Publicis	2000	26. Deutsch Digital	Interpublic	446
2. OgilvyOne	WPP	2000	27. Hill Holliday Digital	Interpublic	425
3. Razorfish	Publicis	1700	28. OMD Digital	Omnicom	425
4. SapientNitro	Independent	1700	29. Arc Worldwide	Publicis	420
5. Epsilon	Independent	1100	30. Campbell-Ewald Digital	Interpublic	400
6. Draftfcb Digital USA	Interpublic	1080	31. Communispace Corporation	Omnicom	350
7. R/GA	Interpublic	981	32. Starcom Digital USA	Publicis	350
8. Euro RSCG 4D	Havas	930	33. Rapp Digital Network	Omnicom	350
9. VML	WPP	835	34. Resource Interactive	Independent	350
10. The Integer Group	Omnicom	815	35. Moxie Interactive	Publicis	350
11. MRM	Interpublic	808	36. iProspect	Aegis	350
12. Dot JWT	WPP	790	37. iCrossing	Independent	345
13. Rosetta	Publicis	750	38. Critical Mass	Omnicom	340
14. Wunderman Interactive	WPP	707	39. G2	WPP	336
15. AKQA	WPP	600	40. Meredith Xcelerated Marketing	Independent	325
16. Carat Interactive	Aegis	570	41. MediaCom Interaction	WPP	318
17. Innovation Interactive	Dentsu	570	42. LBi Group USA	Independent	310
18. MEplusYOU	Independent	525	43. Zenith Media Digital	Publicis	305
19. Publicis Modem	Publicis	525	44. MediaVest Digital USA	Publicis	300
20. Organic	Omnicom	500	45. MEC Interaction	WPP	300
21. Acquity Group	Independent	475	46. Mindshare Digital	WPP	300
22. HUGE	Interpublic	470	47. Saatchi & Saatchi	Publicis	296
23. Tribal DDB	Omnicom	470	48. Atmosphere Proximity	Omnicom	293
24. Acxiom Digital	Independent	460	49. GroupM Search /Outrider/Catalyst Online	WPP	291
25. Roundarch Isobar	Aegis	450	50. KBM Group (Wunderman)	WPP	270

DATA U.S. DIGITAL AGENCIES

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