

AD AGENCIES ARE REBOOTING



BY ANGELO FERNANDO

Depending on whom you talk to, the buzz about advertising around the water cooler suggests (a) the advertising-is-dead theory is coming to pass, or (b) a new breed of advertising companies are about to take the world by storm. Being an incurable optimist, I am more inclined to believe that the latter is true.

"If you want to upset me," said WPP chairman Sir Martin Sorrell charmingly in the *Wall Street Journal* in 2003, "call us an advertising agency." Without much ado, most agencies rephrased their tagline. But a group of digitally savvy agencies went ahead and rebooted their operating system.

In Scottsdale, a company called iCrossing has become the very epitome of this trend. It is one part advertising agency, one part digital marketing company, and has the DNA of a company spawned by the Google economy. I'm talking about those companies that use search engine optimization (SEO) and geo-tracking to get closer to their clients' customers. Search, as you probably know, is the tip of the spear of a new wave of marketing sweeping the planet.

If search is big, local search is the 600-pound gorilla that will create a new tier of marketing...

Advertisers will spend approximately \$7.5 billion on paid searches by 2010, according to Jupiter Research. That's a huge chunk of change, considering that this segment of advertising didn't exist a decade ago. If search is big, local search is the 600-pound gorilla that will create a new tier of marketing, community building, and collaboration and, yes, that thing called advertising — a fact that is not missed by iCrossing. WPP (which owns JWT) and The Interpublic Group (which owns McCann World Group) have digital marketing divisions that don't produce "ads" at all. They design and manage interactive campaigns for brands that target cell phone users, and conduct guerilla-type street promotions and video games as part of a complex branding exercise.

The un-commercial

If you have not seen the Million Dollar Home Page where a student in the U.K. raised a million dollars selling a million pixels populated by logos on a single page of "advertising," you would be in for a surprise (www.milliondollarhomepage.com). Why, because sometimes what transpires as effective advertising, is not exactly what we read about in the books on branding and marketing. It's hard to find convenient labels anymore, considering what TV commercials or radio ads look like and sound like. Honda just released a commercial for the Accord on the Web that is really meant to be experienced on multimedia phones! It has interactive hotspots that you wouldn't be able to click on with a remote, so does that disqualify it as a TV commercial (www.honda.co.uk/civic)?

The new branding

Stop being anxious about the TV format for a moment and consider what's happening to radio, thanks to podcasting. It is suddenly the new darling of marketing and PR. Why? Because it changes the dynamic from the supply of content (within a broadcast framework) to something demand-driven. This narrowcast model is better targeted and more accountable. Podcasts, whether they take the format of a monologue of some guru, or an interview, have terrific longevity since they are listed on podcast engines, *cont. on 18* ▶

VOICE

EVERYONE'S GOT A VOICE. LET YOURS BE HEARD. LOUD AND CLEAR.



"I want to thank you for the branding article you published in *Create Magazine* for Fall 2005. Because of your article, I was able to receive self-promotion materials from the featured artists as well as solid advice for my students."



Ken Hollern,
Ken Hollern Studio



1937

The Phoenix Ad Club began with weekly meetings back in 1937.

Source: Phoenix Ad Club

VOICE

WHERE IN THE WORLD?



Above: Jocelyn Lee of San Francisco's Foote Cone & Belding enjoys *Create Magazine Bay Area* at the Kahala Mandarin Resort in Honolulu.



Above: Austin Clary, nephew of *Create Magazine* V.P. Dana A. Clary, shows the love for the Spring issue of *Create Magazine Central Florida* at Santa Cruz, CA's Yacht Harbor.

Create Magazine is popping up around the corner and around the globe! If you've got a picture of yourself with a *Create Magazine* in hand while traveling, we want to see it! Snap a picture and e-mail us the photo and caption to newsarz@createmagazine.com.

QUESTION OF THE ISSUE



If a client was past due on their bill, would you still refer them to others in the creative community?

E-mail your answers to feedbackarz@createmagazine.com and sound off!

DID YOU KNOW?

For every 100 film industry jobs in Arizona, another 182 jobs exist to service and support the film industry.

Source: Arizona Chamber of Commerce



Image courtesy of Ablestock

CLARIFICATIONS

In the Spring 2006 Onsite article, the AIGA conference should have said that the conference was held at the Hynes Convention Center. In that same article, Mirko's last name should have printed as Ilić.

In the spring issue of Quest, the Web site for Nike Labs should have read www.nikelab.com.

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and hyperlinked and commented on by bloggers. Is this advertising? Of course it is! For a good example of a podcast close to home, check out the weekly podcast of Scottsdale-based GoDaddy.com. "Radio GoDaddy" every Wednesday, is a full-blooded, thinly disguised branding exercise by none other than the domain name registration company's CEO, Bob Parsons, albeit in his raspy voice.

Branding through these new media venues comes with untold challenges. Media planners have to wonder how to measure click-throughs, downloads, behavior patterns and engagement within hundreds of distribution channels. Video games, RSS, and blogs are a few of the disruptive technologies that bear watching. But advertising appears to be coping well. Bizevents.com, the offspring of one of the largest "analog" advertising networks, doesn't create ads. It produces everything from media events to rock concerts, and even manages events for the president of the United States! An agency called 141 Worldwide does database development and field and sports marketing. Agency.com which has a part of the British Airways account, recently created an interactive campaign called Britspeak that works beautifully on the Web site. R/GA, a 400-employee agency involved in digital branding and ecommerce developed the technology behind Reuter's 23-story, 11-panel display in Times Square that displays images and data from 20 global news feeds and in real time. Interactive ads on cell phones? Rock concerts, reverse direct marketing and podcasts? This is not your father's advertising! ■

Angelo Fernando is a Mesa-based technology writer trapped in the body of a marketing guy. He has worked at JWT and Ogilvy and Mather advertising which, to his relief, are no longer the kind of "analog" agencies at which he takes pot shots.

New brand channels

- 1. Games:** Finland's TV stations now run programs that are nothing more than Tetris-styled games and text-based quizzes. Players are TV viewers who participate with cell phones and SMS! Imagine trying to interrupt a game such as this with a traditional 15- or 30-second commercial!
- 2. RSS:** This Web-based news distribution mechanism popularized by blogs is becoming the de rigeur of all media companies. People now use their smart phones and hand-held computers such as the Palm Treo to subscribe to their choice of news, thereby time-shifting their habits and frustrating all the science of media planning!
- 3. Blogs:** For years, Web logs or blogs were under the radar of most marketers, and were not considered creative enough to be part of the media mix. But blogs have been on a rocket ship impacting anything from political reputations and brand perceptions to search engine rankings. Once dismissed as vanity exercises, blogs are big business, growing at the rate of 70,000 a day! Some corporations encourage employees to blog (Microsoft's Robert Scoble, was named by *Economist* magazine as the company's "chief humanizing officer") while others are treating it like media itself, placing ads on blogs that have highly specialized readership.

LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD.

Got any comments, feedback, statistics, questions, thoughts or photos that you would like to share with us? Send them to feedbackarz@createmagazine.com.