

**HD** PRWeek Awards Asia 2014: **Gold** Awards

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ASIA-PACIFIC NETWORK OF THE YEAR

FleishmanHillard

**TD**

For FleishmanHillard, 2013 was a milestone year with the launch of its refreshed brand and proposition, 'The power of True'. The agency says the word 'True' speaks to FleishmanHillard's 'unique ability to go beyond the traditional definition of public relations to deliver the power of integrated communications solutions'.

The commitment to deliver on this vision in Asia-Pacific in 2013 saw the network, which comprises three brands and 19 owned offices in 10 countries, grow 16 per cent organically year on year to reach a record high - despite a slowing economy in **China**, turmoil in Thailand, and emerging market challenges in Southeast Asia - thanks to 'True innovation and collaboration'. Established in Asia in 1994, the agency started in Beijing and has since expanded to 19 offices in 19 years. In 2013, for the first time, Greater **China operations** emerged as the largest single generator of revenue with a 49 per cent share of the region.

The growth story is continuing in Southeast Asia where **operations** expanded by 31 per cent, driven by a 30 per cent revenue increase from its top three clients and the **acquisition** of 44 new client relationships, including significant global technology clients such as HP, EMC and SAP.

In certain key sectors, investment in new resources, approaches and expertise netted 'tremendous success'. At the top is crisis/issues management with a 204 per cent boost in business, followed by technology (up 52 per cent), brand marketing (up 28 per cent), and manufacturing and industrial work rising 15 per cent.

The agency claims that most of its top 10 clients deal with at least five of its branch offices, proving that it is a true network. It says its belief in establishing true partnerships with clients has seen revenue growth and account **acquisition** numbers attain new heights in 2013, with its top 10 clients growing their spend with FleishmanHillard by 78 per cent and 205 major new client partnerships added across the region.

AUSTRALIA/NZ PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

Red Agency Sydney

Part of Havas Group, Red Agency's vision is to create Australia's most inspirational and groundbreaking campaigns - five each year that are different or revolutionary. This came to life in 2013 with the agency taking away 23 national and international industry awards for work completed by the Sydney office alone, including three Cannes Lions.

The agency's goal was to create campaigns that are 'deliberately shareable', such as the world's first petition-signing robot for the charity Save Our Sons, for a campaign called 'The most powerful arm ever invented'. The campaign - this year's Campaign of the Year at the PRWeek Asia awards - aimed to raise awareness for the disease Duchenne muscular dystrophy. In addition to building the online site platform and social content, the agency drove social conversations and significant, tangible outcomes, including a host of media coverage, a meeting with the health minister and a pharmaceutical **company** agreeing to begin clinical trials (valued in excess of USdollars 800,000).

Red Agency is also working with the United Nations Foundation to help improve Australian public awareness and understanding of climate change. It was awarded Australia/New Zealand PR Consultancy of the Year for pioneering a major shakeup of the traditional PR agency structure, focusing on compelling storytelling, social engagement, brand experience and content creation, all of which are embedded in audience insight and brilliant creative.

#### GREATER **CHINA** PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

Weber Shandwick Beijing

Weber Shandwick's executive committee last year set in motion a strategy to rapidly transform the agency into an integrated engagement and communications powerhouse. With command-centre **operations** in Beijing and extensive support in Shanghai and Guangzhou for nationwide efforts, each office and team was equipped with the expertise and tools to help guide its clients through the challenges that lie ahead.

The agency set out to deliver value to clients by reimagining the way it creates content for audiences, made unconventional new hires to diversify its talent pool, and leveraged its understanding of **Chinese** challenges to develop specialist tools, methodologies and consultancies.

Weber Shandwick's relationships with existing clients, particularly its largest partnerships, continued to deepen and yield groundbreaking results, while the consultancy expanded and diversified its client base through new wins.

The agency's strategy led to it recording a year-on-year profit increase of 70 per cent in 2013, on the back of 26 per cent growth in annual revenue and a 20 per cent reduction in staff turnover. Its first-quarter 2014 revenue finished up 55 per cent over the same period in 2013.

#### JAPAN/KOREA PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

Ashton Consulting Tokyo

Ashton was founded in 2000 by current CEO John Sunley. The independent agency believes that winning and retaining high-quality PR work in Japan demands persistence and the ability to adapt PR solutions to the country's distinct cultural and business environment. With extensive experience in Japan's communications landscape, Ashton rapidly expanded its client list, sales and profits in 2013 by guiding and advising large international foreign firms operating in Japan in their PR and communications strategies, while helping Japanese companies grow and protect their reputation with key global audiences.

In 2013, Ashton's sales grew by 42 per cent and profits by 85 per cent, driven by an expanding range of work from existing clients and significant client wins. It was chosen as PR agency for several of the largest **M&A** transactions in the country, and was the clear No. 1 among Japan-based agencies in the Mergermarket **M&A** 2013 communications ranking.

Ashton retained all of its clients in 2013, many of which were 10-year partnerships. It provided innovative services, including a Twitter campaign in Japan for Tourism New Zealand to celebrate the release of *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*, using a giant 'one ring' replica of the movie prop. The photo Twitter campaign of the ring's journey around film locations in New Zealand and the subsequent competition resulted in over 2 **million** impressions on social media prior to its arrival in Japan.

#### SOUTHEAST ASIA PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

Leo Burnett/Arc Worldwide Malaysia

Last year saw unprecedented results for PR in terms of financial growth, originality in ideation, media reach and public engagement for Leo Burnett/Arc's clients. The agency's strategic thinking, progressive solutions and fast response time not only sealed its ties with existing clients, but propelled new business growth of 76 per cent in a market where GDP is growing at approximately 5 per cent.

The agency has succeeded by restructuring to create the 'agency of the future' and developing the PR discipline to drive new business wins. It has integrated traditional PR with social media and created integrators - people with the ability to use business opportunities to maximise results and create the most impact for clients. A LB Learning Centre was set up to develop effective ideation.

The agency embraced technology and kept its edge, achieving a profit of 30 per cent and an all-time record of 75 per cent growth. In fact, it achieved its bottom line as early as the first quarter of 2013. By maximising efficiencies, Leo Burnett/Arc Worldwide Malaysia's operating margin is above 25 per cent.

yearly and is higher than the Leo Burnett global average. The office has consistently delivered the best operating margins across all Asia-Pacific offices and claims the strongest annualised growth rates.

#### BOUTIQUE PR CONSULTANCY OF THE YEAR

Red Bridge Communications

Red Bridge Comms' vision is to be the go-to communications agency for clients that want peer-led strategic counsel, integrated thinking, creative effectiveness and executional excellence. The aim is to deliver everything the large networked agencies can, and what they can't, including 'flexibility, impartiality, the freedom to take risks and challenge the status quo and results-driven entrepreneurial savvy'.

Its 2013 business strategy was to target premium and niche brands seeking a **lead** agency partner for end-to-end communications solutions. It didn't want to limit its thinking to traditional PR activities, but ideas that can be translated across all channels; typically incorporating a strong social, digital and experiential component. It structured its business to give clients greater access to **lead** senior consultants and specialist advisors to ensure consistently high standards of campaign management, and focused on its core capabilities and built a portfolio of best-in-class partners to collaborate with in areas beyond its expertise. As a result, in 2013, the agency achieved 51 per cent revenue growth year on year, lost only one client and had a staff turnover rate of 6 per cent. The agency acted as **lead** agency for nine of its top 10 clients. It continued to develop its social media strategy and extended its crisis management expertise.

#### YOUNG PR PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Sarah Edwards

Ogilvy PR **Hong Kong**

Sarah Edwards joined the travel, tourism and entertainment practice (TTE) at Ogilvy Public Relations **Hong Kong** in 2011 as a consultant. She was charged with building the agency's travel credentials in a highly competitive market and strengthening the practice's 'hub' and innovative position. She was promoted to account director within two years. Playing a crucial role in the integration of the discipline's local social team in the TTE practice in 2013, Edwards now co-leads a team of up to 15 budding PRs and is responsible for new business growth, current client nurturing and expansion, planning, strategy and client counsel, as well as the development of individuals. In September 2013, she was promoted again (her second promotion in a year) to corporate communications director.

Edwards excels in pitching, public speaking and gaining trust from peers and clients - allowing her to **lead** the charge in growth and farming clients. While still co-driving the travel practice, maintaining key client relationships and new business leads, Edwards now works with regional presidents to identify internal and external opportunities.

Ogilvy PR **Hong Kong** MD Clara Shek says: 'Sarah is one of the fastest-growing practitioners I've ever worked with. She's smart, responsible, confident and a perfect people person. Her willingness to take on more and her daring to step into the unknown allowed us to rapidly expand her capabilities and skills. She shines in every challenge.'

#### PR PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

Michael de Kretser

Go Communications

Michael de Kretser, founder and CEO of Go Communications (Malaysia) and chairman of Go Group, has full operational responsibility for the PR agency, which includes bottom-line results, hiring of key executives, pitching for new business, creative campaigns for clients, staff training and retention.

In 2013, he led a revenue increase of 56 per cent, profit before tax of 38 per cent, and fees of 64 per cent. Under his leadership, the agency's client base grew by over 43 per cent, and recorded a new-business-pitched success rate of over 90 per cent. Key reasons for this success were creativity, brief articulation, track record, and staff experience. Moreover, client retention was over 95 per cent, while retainer fees for existing clients increased by 25 per cent. Major client wins included Thistle Hotels, Crewstone International, Defence Services Asia, HungryGoWhere.com, London Speaker Bureau, Kuala Lumpur Sports Medical Centre and Maxman.tv.

De Krester has authored books and is a committee member of the Institute of Public Relations Malaysia (IPRM) accreditation committee, member of the National Kidney Foundation of Malaysia publicity and promotions committee, which aims to publicise kidney health awareness and donations.

#### PR AGENCY HEAD OF THE YEAR

Matthew Lackie

Waggener Edstrom Communications

Matthew Lackie is senior vice-president and Asia-Pacific **lead** at Waggener Edstrom. After appointing Lackie, WE made great strides in evolving its business from a collection of individual offices to one of Asia's top regional networks. By end-2013, the region had increased its revenue by 11 per cent and pre-rent profit by 31 per cent, it had 33 new clients and 13 per cent more new regional clients, while achieving a 90 per cent employee retention rate. The agency now boasts a rapidly growing and diversified client portfolio and fully-formed healthcare, corporate, consumer and technology practices, each underpinned by a dynamic digital practice.

WE has experienced portfolio growth with leading non-tech brands and has been especially successful in winning new clients for the consumer practice, such as Jetstar, Lancel and Pernod Ricard. Lackie has driven the strategic expansion of WE's APAC team through non-traditional hires. Former lawyers, journalists and converted tech specialists have been brought in to create a formidable pool of skills, knowledge, and perspectives aimed at providing clients with integrated and creative solutions.

Lackie is PR Agency Head of the Year for understanding the continuously evolving industry, staying close to clients, and being an accessible and open leader. His strategy has expanded the agency's regional offering, kept his team engaged and eager to learn, and instituted industry thought leadership.

#### IN-HOUSE PR TEAM OF THE YEAR

In-house PR team at Saatchi & Saatchi **China**

Saatchi & Saatchi **China** says its goal is to be revered as a hothouse for world-changing creative ideas that transform its clients' businesses, brands and reputations and to be a 'Lovemark' brand in the hearts of more people.

Prior to 2013, the agency had almost no social media presence. The PR team set out to develop a following of fans ranking among the industry's top three agencies. Fans on the agency's Weibo account rocketed by 800 per cent, breaking 170,000 followers, the most in the industry and 25 per cent more than its closest competitor. Over 40,000 average views of daily posts were attained and the team also managed the **China** section of the agency's Asia-Pacific blog, attracting an average of more than 10,000 daily views.

To raise awareness outside the industry, the team planned a series of public service ads (the Aged Care TV series and the 'Silent world') and events ('Water for children', the 'Paper cuts life' art performances and the 'Eco office' project). It devised an awards strategy (picking up a Silver in Campaign's Agency of the Year) and among other initiatives, secured a partnership with Starcom to offer insights into women's psyches and needs across Greater **China**.

#### CAMPAIGN OF THE YEAR

Winner

The most powerful arm ever invented

Red Agency

Objective

Save Our Sons is an Australian charity dedicated to raising awareness and funds for Duchenne muscular dystrophy (DMD), a rare and fatal muscle degenerative disease that affects one in 3,500 boys worldwide. The charity wanted to approach the Australian government, to match monies already raised (USdollars 1.65 **million**) to fund essential clinical trials. For this they needed to gain the support of the Australian public, but the charity and disease itself lacked national awareness.

Strategy

'The most powerful arm ever invented' was created to capture public interest and support for the cause. With no budget behind the campaign, disseminating key messages about the disease relied solely on

PR. The strategy was to use Australian earned media channels to tell the story of DMD sufferers and drive people to the robot arm for immediate action. Key media targets were identified across TV, radio, online and print, as well as parenting, lifestyle, technology and health verticals and social media. A face and spokesperson, DMD sufferer Jacob Lancaster, was appointed to bring the campaign to life through his own story in a video on the website. The font created for the robot arm to write in was taken from the last piece of handwriting Jacob created before he lost the ability to write, a Mother's Day card.

#### Results

Over the campaign's nine-week period it achieved 193 media articles with a combined coverage reach of over 20 **million**. The campaign website achieved more than 60,000 page views, which resulted in over 32,000 signatures. Moreover, following the campaign, a pharmaceutical **company** agreed to commence clinical trials with the funds raised to date, rather than waiting for the total sum required from government.

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