

# Media Specialists Come of Age

Three leading media specialists offer their take on marketing, money, measurement — and more

## Pit Bulls at the High Table

“The specialist media agency was slow to get going, and it received much virulent comment and attack from the established agency community. But it happened, and media specialists now control the bulk of global media buying. What has been most interesting to witness has been the ever-changing role that they play, to see the battle for strategic control taking place between media specialist, creative agency and the

new breed of strategic planning consultants, such as Naked.

“At the core of this contest for control has been the client’s change in attitude toward the media specialists. They were once seen by many as a rather disconnected adjunct to the creative agency, a group of hard-nosed pit bulls that

were paid a lowly commission to turn out single-dimensional plans (TV and print ruled) and then buy them at the lowest possible prices.

“By contrast, the media agency will now

“Media specialists now control the bulk of global media buying.”



**Mike Jarvis**  
Media Director  
Banner Group

most often sit at the ‘high table’ and on the right side of the client, playing a major role in the development of the campaign, media and, dare I say, creative strategy. An observer from Mars might well be confused by this battle, after being made aware that most of the players all belong to the same global communications networks, but I guess competition has always been good for the client and keeps all parties on their toes and striving for perfection.

“There are indications that the business could well be coming full circle. As the media-planning role becomes ever more complex and increasingly integrated within other communications channels such as events, digital and lead-generation programs, it becomes vital for the function to take place within a fully integrated environment and mentality. Already we have seen some major players pulling back their isolated online specialists within the traditional planning teams and even integrating creative functions. Hell, before long I can hear claims being made that the Holy Grail of communications has been found — a team of like-thinking specialists working under a single roof, all striving to a common goal, client satisfaction, regardless of how they achieve that goal — an ad agency by any other name!

“I have no doubt that media specialists will continue to evolve as the media grows ever more complex and consumers take a greater role in their own consumption. But

the easy days are over, and clients are no longer willing to blindly throw vast sums of dollars at brand campaigns that provide little or no measurable ROI. Fragmentation will demand far more complex multimedia solutions, and the media will have to be far more willing to demonstrate value for money. At the same time, the media agency will have to be willing to invest in research tools that can truly measure and quantify the effects of the client investment.”

CONTACT: [mike.jarvis@b1.com](mailto:mike.jarvis@b1.com)

## The Brightest Minds in the Business

“Media specialists were always ‘of age.’ In my experience, media specialists were always populated by the brightest minds in the business. Over the years, you realize that a good creative director can be a media director and a good media director can be a good creative director. Media and creative specialists are strikingly similar in their foundation — they think about the consumer first and how to influence him/her second. I always thought that the next stage of industry integration



**Marcelo Salup**,  
Senior Vice  
President &  
Director of  
Marketing  
GrupoUno

## ANNIE RODGERS



“In 2006, Discovery Networks forged creative and complex communications solutions for our advertisers, both at international and local levels. Leveraging content across multiple platforms was central to our partnership with Philips, and the creation of bespoke short-form programming broke new ground for Nokia and Toyota. On the local level, new clients such as Microsoft Xbox, Davidoff and Shell also resulted from exclusive content creation.”

CONTACT: [annie\\_rodgers@discovery-europe.com](mailto:annie_rodgers@discovery-europe.com)

## MATTHEW FARRAR



“Media today is an exciting exchange of ideas among journalists, consumers and advertisers. As media representatives in Asia, we stand at the nexus of this extraordinary conversation between smart, vibrant media owners and many of the world’s most dynamic clients and ad agencies. We also have the good fortune of working on two important launches — *Condé Nast Portfolio* and *Monocle*. There is no question that each, in its own way, will alter our perceptions of a 21st century global magazine.”

CONTACT: [mfarrar@mezzogroup.com](mailto:mfarrar@mezzogroup.com)



“ I always thought that the next stage would come from media specialists building creative units. ”

would come from media specialists building creative units. I don't see that happening a lot yet, but you can see some action in that direction.

“There has to be a concerted industry-wide effort to develop an objective, impartial model of how advertising, marketing, media, promotions — all of that — add value to a client. Agencies typically spend no money on their own R&D. It would be unthinkable for another manufacturer (and we manufacture ideas) to not spend any money on its own R&D, yet the industry continues to do so. In all honesty, I can't believe that the industry just doesn't get together, pitch in \$2 million each and get an objective model that proves how advertising works once and for all.

“For a long time, when you worked in media, you were expected to document everything: audience delivery, reach, intra-media reach, frequency, reach at the effective frequency and much more. The rising importance of 'new' media made these metrics less relevant in some cases. But we never developed a substitute currency. I have, over the years, used some 'bonding' models, assigned decision-making percentages and much more to my media strategies. However, there were no hard numbers, no metrics, not even agreement on many terms. The erosion of traditional media metrics followed by not

having a substitute model has created media plans that, IMHO, have a lot of conjectures posing as facts and are often arbitrary.

“As for having a global P&L, one has to be a bit cynical about the entire idea. Imagine managing a worldwide, honest-to-goodness global P&L. The real McCoy. Wow! Can you imagine the level of complexity? The amazing analytical prowess? The überpresence of a person who can do this? I don't think that there are enough people like that to go around. To me, a true global P&L sounds like painting an aircraft carrier — by the time you finish, it's time to start again. I don't think the idea is either practical or doable on a sustainable basis.”

CONTACT: [msalup@grupouno.com](mailto:msalup@grupouno.com)

### Winning the Game of Engagement

“Today, the name of the game is 'Engage.' Advertisers need to be able stand out from the clutter and grab the attention of the customer. As a result, true media specialists (and I don't mean buyers with a calculator) can now use their experience and knowledge to create and deliver great ideas that will offer advertisers opportunities to realize engagement objectives. The classic solutions of double-page spreads, gatefolds, tip-ons and holograms are on the way out. In their place we have DVDs (audio and video), bound-in booklets and special sections. Offering the customer something useful and something to jog the memory.

Engagement.

“One reason is that the media have had to become more flexible and accommodating. Media owners are now expected to be able to deliver 'through-the-line' solutions — a complete package from advertising message exposure to face-to-face dialogue opportunities and measurements of success. As a result, the thin but rigorous line between church and state is getting thinner and less rigorous.

“Let's face it — they are better working as a team. The media agency has a stronger understanding of the client's business and business objectives. The advertiser has an opportunity to get closer to appreciating how his communications objectives can be delivered. The media owner is able to deliver a solution to the advertiser, while at the same time delivering an enhanced product to his readers or viewers. The challenge is to continue to develop and improve on those engagement solutions.”

CONTACT: [adrian.smith@mediacom.uk.com](mailto:adrian.smith@mediacom.uk.com)



**Adrian Smith**  
Account Director  
MediaCom

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#### RALPH LOCKWOOD



“ For Huson, 2006 was a clear success story, with a 63% increase in revenues. Our growth resulted from new and developing partnerships with CMP Technology, Reader's Digest and Reed Business Information, as well as a healthy economic climate that allowed for substantial print and digital ad growth. This expansion is also reflected in our sales staffing; in January 2005 we were 9 people in the U.S., now we are 16 — a 77 percent increase. ”

CONTACT: [ralph@husonusa.com](mailto:ralph@husonusa.com)

#### RHONA MURPHY



“ Newsweek saw new pan-regional campaigns in 2006 from the U.S., such as MetLife and Verizon, as well as robust business from Germany, the Middle East and Asia. There is no question that multinational corporations are refocusing on the need to communicate more to a global audience. Our multi-local offerings had continued growth. We now have eight non-English Newsweek editions, including a new launch in Turkey; these all represent interesting alternatives for advertisers. ”

CONTACT: [rhona.murphy@newsweek.com](mailto:rhona.murphy@newsweek.com)