

RESPECT WEST COAST CONTRIBUTORS



Stephen Arnold

Since writing his first television jingle in 1978, Stephen Arnold has composed the musical signatures for some of the world's best-known media and consumer brands. As president of Stephen Arnold Music, founded in 1993, Arnold heads a full-service music production company with headquarters in Dallas, and offices in New York, San Diego and Santa Fe. Arnold has a well-established reputation for delivering the successful sounds that make a difference. When he's not composing, Arnold spends his time immersed in his role as father (he has four kids), snow skiing and playing his Dobro (resonator guitar), while tending to T-bone and Meatloaf, his Black Angus bull and cow.



Calvin Lee

Mayhem Studios is a small, award-winning design firm located in Los Angeles, developing identity and brand recognition for the business sector across the nation. The Studio uses strategic and creative design with effective messages targeted to the client's specific audiences to produce identity and branded collateral pieces, brochures, logo design, advertising and interactive Web sites. Lee, principal and creative director of Mayhem Studios is a graduate of Platt College and serves as a member of the Platt College Advisory Board, NOISPEC Committee and is on the Creative Latitude Management Team. For more information, please visit, www.mayhemstudios.com or call 323.276.9503.



Jaimy Lee

Jaimy Lee spent nearly two years working as a reporter for one of San Diego County's community daily newspapers before joining the dubious ranks of freelance writers. Her work has appeared in the "San Diego Union-Tribune," "San Diego Home/Garden & Lifestyles," "San Diego Business Journal," *944 Magazine* and the launch issue of *BizMe*. This is her second article for *Create Magazine*. The Point Loma Nazarene University graduate has covered sports, arts, business, travel and news.



Jeff Oswalt

Jeff Oswalt is a 10-year veteran of the creative/advertising/entertainment industries. Oswalt runs Motiv Interactive, an interactive marketing agency that partners with traditional ad agencies to help them with their client's online marketing needs. Through these relationships, Motiv has worked with clients such as T Mobile, Fox Sports and MTV. Oswalt serves as a board member with various nonprofits and is most proud of his work with Spokane's Coaches vs Cancer. He currently lives in Spokane, WA with his wife and two lovely daughters.

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Images courtesy of Asbury Communications, Google, Mortar, Rescue Social Change, Wongdoody

AGENCY

WORDS: JAIMY LEE
DESIGN: MAYHEM STUDIOS

ROLL CALL

WEST COAST AGENCIES PURVEY THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF THE ADVERTISING INDUSTRY

Tim Spry remembers what life in the advertising industry was like before the dot-coms went bust. San Francisco was a booming advertising town back then – big agencies, big accounts, big names – until bust day. Steadily and quietly, the industry has rebuilt itself and Spry, creative director and principal at Mortar, has seen the city by the bay rediscover its name-recognition to make San Francisco an industry threat on the West Coast.

He attributes the resurgence to the city's proximity to Silicon Valley and the obvious corresponding history with online advertising. Mortar itself is a mid-sized agency that offers advertising, branding and public relations, but Spry has watched – with what seems like a fair amount of hometown pride – four city agencies nab MINI, Audi, Jeep and Hyundai accounts in the past year. So what was rehab like for these San Francisco agencies?

"We've adopted an integrated model ahead of the rest of the country," he says. "The agencies are healthy. It's a lot like it was during the dot-coms. There's bidding wars for jobs, we're flying people in from out of state."

Maybe it's because San Francisco and Silicon Valley are intertwined and maybe it's because the city is a pretty hip place, but Spry, who boasts 20-plus years in the industry, doesn't flinch when it comes to discussion of social-networking sites and blogs as means of advertising. He uses the same tone when he discusses television commercials or print advertising campaigns.

BRANDING IS MORE THAN A 30-SECOND COMMERCIAL BROADCAST DURING “GREY’S ANATOMY”

No one really likes to be quoted anymore saying that the Internet has changed things. That’s a given fact. But embracing and using the tools and fads that the Internet provides is another fact.

In San Diego, 23-year-old entrepreneur Jeff Jordan runs marketing company Rescue Social Change, which focuses solely on social change campaigns. Rescue Social Change is hired by cities, counties and states across the country to create so-called “cultural interventions,” Jordan says.

During a recent campaign for the State of Virginia, Rescue Social Change sought to reduce violence among the hip-hop culture. They threw lavish VIP parties, created clothing lines, designed social-networking sites, and created role models who were non-violent, smoke-free and drug-free. “If you’re in marketing, you change people’s preference,” Jordan says. “Or you can change people’s behavior. Not a lot of campaigns can do that.”

It comes down to branding a lifestyle, a culture. Branding is more than a 30-second commercial broadcast during “Grey’s Anatomy,” or a billboard dangling somewhere above the 405 North freeway. During a campaign with the city of Las Vegas, Rescue Social Change worked for the concept of tobacco prevention using a range of tactics such as advertising, flyers, Web sites, posters and displays, and clothes. Youth smoking has dropped from 33 percent to 18 percent in the six years since the campaign started.

“Less than half of our business is advertising,” says Ben Wiener, principal of traditional advertising agency Wongdoody in Los Angeles. “It’s design, interactive brand development, strategic consulting, product development ... more things for existing clients.”

Wongdoody is an independent communications office founded in Seattle in 1993 and opened its Los Angeles office in 1997. The agency reports billing in excess of \$100 million and provides services like advertising, design, media, public relations, interactive and research. Some clients, Wiener says, are not remotely interested in advertising, so he and the rest of the staff at Wongdoody help analyze what it is they are interested in. In the past, the agency would take “a big retainer and crank out the advertising,” Wiener says.

Spalding is one of Wongdoody’s clients. It’s a name with recognition, in and out of the sports industry, yet the name doesn’t have the same identity as Nike, Adidas or Puma. For Wongdoody, the long-term goal for Spalding is unique. “How to make them relevant,” Wiener says. “It’s a combination of image, product, distribution. We want them to have increasing relevance in this sport.”

As traditional advertising campaigns are fading in the background, Wiener has learned that a lot of people associated with traditional advertising are also becoming irrelevant.



Clothing designs for Las Vegas’ Smokefree Campaign for LGBT young adults. Images courtesy of Rescue Social Change



Images courtesy of Asbury Communications and Mortar

"You can't re-title an art director or an account guy," he says. "In the past 18 months, we've started to reposition ourselves with our clients." More so, advertising agencies are looking at the ways to brand a company – to create that brand by word, and then implement it by action. "We'll see how all these pieces fit together toward a business goal," Wiener continues. "The brand identity, design, packaging."

Integration equals relevance to the needs of the clients. Instead of pointing fingers back and forth at each other, agencies and clients are working together toward what they see as an ultimate goal. Also, smaller clients need agencies to play a more active role than in the past, Wiener says.

With Spalding, the agency provided no advertising, only strategy innovation. Wongdoody recently pitched another client, The Resort at Pelican Hill in Newport Beach, as an advertising agency until both client and agency realized that what the luxury resort needed was a brand identity. Wiener elaborates, "How do we build the brand? How do we create a brand identity? Word-of-mouth?"

The resort is scheduled to open in Fall 2007, so the agency has the chance to actually create the brand in advance. Because it is a luxury resort, the client will not advertise traditionally but will use Wongdoody for strategic positioning.

For an agency, going integrated is a change. For an established agency such as Wongdoody that has more than 20 years of advertising under its belt, it's a big change. Recently, the agency hired 25 staff members that specialize in strategy

and consulting or design. Wiener notes that the addition of public relations is necessary and needed for creditable product development. "(The whole process is) really exciting," he says. "We can re-create the relevance that creative people have."

Dan Harary opened Asbury Communications in Beverly Hills nearly 11 years ago. To no surprise, the publicist and his staff are heavily involved with Hollywood and the film industry. It's also no surprise that most of Asbury's clients believe that positive press equals a positive influence on their bank accounts.

"A lot of companies want to appear successful to investors," Harary explains. "Clients are requesting business-oriented press like the 'L.A. Times' business section or the 'L.A. Business Journal.'"

One example? Asbury worked with a graphic design company Pittard Sullivan for six and a half years. After a cover story in "Variety," among other press, the company increased business by three or four times.

But Harary notes that as a boutique agency that specializes in public relations, it's hard out there. Fewer boutique firms specialize and many public relations agencies are consolidating with advertising and marketing to create a more integrated model that offers clients a one-stop shop.

"It's David versus Goliath," Harary says. "It's difficult to stay in business, but our word-of-mouth is really good."

“IT'S DAVID VERSUS GOLIATH.”



Images courtesy of Wongdoody

At Google, a company that tends to personify the idea of brand marketing, the concept of an integrated model is already present. A Google Corporate Communications spokesperson lists two key ideas of how advertising is changing: the old and new way of advertising is coming together to form a more full-marketing experience for advertisers, and campaign measurement is becoming more transparent and accountable to the advertiser.

"Internet advertising is moving beyond just search advertising to include rich forms of media – video ads, display – and even offline – radio, print, TV. The online and offline ad markets will begin breaking down walls to help businesses reach audiences outside of their normal scope of marketing," a Google spokesperson said in an e-mail.

Back in San Francisco, Spry and the team at Mortar took on Isilon Systems, a technology company that provides data storage. "Not so sexy" is how Spry puts it. "It's like plumbing, you need it, but it's not sexy." But for Web sites such as Facebook or Kodak, that have video, music or text files, it's a necessity.

"Two years ago, we really (wanted to) create a brand," Spry says. Mortar set out to create a "How Breakthroughs Begin" campaign that featured a public relations component, a traditional print component and a big online presence.

It quickly turned into the "Almost" campaign, which highlights people like the guy who almost came up with Starbucks or the guy who almost came up with online bookstores. You know, maybe in the case that their computer crashed because they didn't have enough storage, or something close to that.

It's probably fair to say that, regionally, almost everyone can relate to that in Silicon Valley. Mortar then launched the Almost awards – an idea that spread Isilon Systems to a broader audience and created a fair amount of word-of-mouth.

"We're a one-stop shop for medium clients," Spry says. "It's actually possible ... In the old days, we would have a great campaign that was truly subjective. We would never think about our target audience. We're a brand shop much more than anything else." ■

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

WORDS: JAIMY LEE

Jaimy Lee spent nearly two years as a reporter for a local newspaper in San Diego County until she quit her job for five weeks of Eiffel Tower photos, Oktoberfest steins and Roman rainstorms. After returning, she has worked for a freelance writer out of San Diego, contributing to the "San Diego Business Journal," "San Diego Home/Garden & Lifestyles," the "San Diego Union-Tribune," Today's Local News, *Carlsbad Magazine* and *944 Magazine*. The Point Loma Nazarene University graduate has covered sports, arts, business and hard news and still isn't sure what her favorite topic is to write about.

DESIGN: MAYHEM STUDIOS

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