

By Surina Sayal | Published: 18 Jun 2009, 5:30 AM IST

OOH

Encyclomedia goes international through JVs

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The agency has formed joint ventures in Australia and Argentina to form Encyclomedia Australia and Encyclomedia LatAm, respectively

“Strategy and creativity know no boundaries,” says Mukesh Manik, man-in-charge of the effective advertising communications agency, Encyclomedia Networks, which has recently formed joint ventures with companies in Australia and Argentina. In fact, Encyclomedia Networks is one of the first Indian agencies to venture out and open offices in Australia and Latin America.

In India, Encyclomedia has unleashed memorable outdoor and ambient creatives for brands such as Sprite, Dove, Airtel, Hewlett-Packard and Thums Up. It now takes this creativity and out-of-box thinking across borders.

Encyclomedia tied up with Australian company MediaTag, which is a part of the Deasil group of companies. Deasil’s current portfolio of operational businesses include Australian Leasing Group, Candidates Alive, Deasil Design, Deasil Property Group, Deasil Trading, Dipped, The Drilling Group, Goal Management Group, Launch Two People, The Market Stars, MediaTag, Rosch Group and VitaminMe.

In January 2009, the foundation was laid to form Encyclomedia Australia, a partnership between MediaTag and Encyclomedia Networks. Encyclomedia Australia will service New Zealand as well.

Venturing into the Latin American region more recently, Encyclomedia tied up with Argentina based Strata Group. The founders of the Strata Group have a successful history with advertising agencies and direct marketing companies such as Lautrec Saatchi & Saatchi, Clienting Group, RappCollins, Amiratti Puris Lintas, and also held senior positions within the marketing structure in large companies such as Publicom, CTI Móvil and the Rover Group.

The JV, Encyclomedia LatAm, was formed in April 2009 and the Spanish website, www.encyclomediala.com, was launched in May 2009. This venture is being headed by Federico Hirschberg, who is the president of Encyclomedia LatAm. The Argentina office will service Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico.

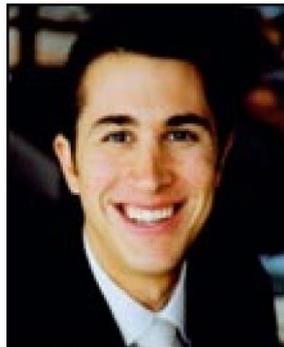
An important reason for a JV in this region was that in Latin America, Spanish is the dominant spoken language and it was important for the company to have a local presence to overcome the challenge of language and cultures.

Why these specific countries? "Encyclomedia had been exploring the Latin American and Australian markets for some time now. The main aim of having tie ups in these specific countries was the progressive and futuristic outlook both the countries have towards outdoor advertising. Creating a new landscape for OOH and retail markets in the respective countries by showcasing high impact designs and campaigns was one of the reasons for these tie ups," says Manik

Initially, Encyclomedia had worked on a project basis with both the companies. Once it was established that they shared the same mindset and vision for the growth of the business, they made a decision to set up a more permanent arrangement through the JV.



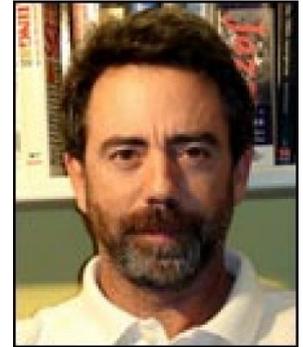
Mukesh Manik



Dean Weinman



Grant Samuel



Federico Hirschberg

“We believe that to be successful in a highly competitive industry, we must have a point of difference,” says Dean Weinman, director, MediaTag.

Grant Samuel, director, MediaTag, says, “Encyclomedia compliments MediaTag’s existing business by bringing an unparalleled level of creative and strategic expertise to out of home and point of sale advertising.”

Federico Hirschberg, president, Encyclomedia LatAm, says, “Encyclomedia has introduced us to an out of home niche model, one which is yet to be seen in South America, and showcased high impact designs that we believe clients would benefit from in Latin America.”

The agency has already begun campaigns in these markets, working on brands such as L’Oreal Israel, Bakers Delight, Nintendo, Cadbury, Target, Golden Casket and STA Travel in Australia since January; and Samsung in Argentina.

For Bakers Delight, the agency created stickers to go on the food display units in stores, making them resemble ovens, thus highlighting 'oven fresh' bakery products. L'Oreal Israel's 'Natural Sea Beauty' saw its sales shoot up in Australia's Target stores, where 3D floor stickers introduced the product at store entrances and in cosmetics aisles.

In the Target chain, to promote the Easter Department, the agency created festive Easter Bunny floor stickers for Cadbury. For Samsung in Argentina, the agency created 'shattering' work, literally, where window stickers made it seem like the U900 model was breaking through the glass windows.

The newly formed companies, Encyclomedia Australia and Encyclomedia LatAm, are working with existing clients of MediaTag and the Strata Group, as well as pitching to new ones.

Manik says, "Clearly, there is a high acceptance of our creative output and it was part of our long term strategy to expand internationally. All we needed to do is find the right partners to form the JV with, and replicate our success in new markets."

The working relationship of both the ventures is that the sales and account management team will be based in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Melbourne, Australia respectively, whilst the creative, design and production teams will be based in Mumbai, India.

Comparing these markets to India, Manik says, "Latin America has very high creative standards in television and print media. As in all other markets, a majority of the advertising spends go to TV and print, which attract a lot more talent than outdoor and retail creative.

Our focus will always be to create an impact in outdoor and retail. Our solutions are new to both markets and have gained acceptance quickly.”

He claims that revenues in Latin America and Australia are at par with India. However, the decision making process is a lot faster than in India and as a result, there is a quicker turnaround of projects as those markets are more mature and organised.