

TOUGH TIMES = SMARTER CHOICES ADVERTISERS FIND ROOM TO BREATHE WITH SMALLER AD AGENCIES

[ORADELL, NJ] – [October 27, 2008] With words like *thrifty, frugal, economical,* and *cautious* being thrown around like they're the newest fall accessory, it's not surprising that so many companies are shifting, reallocating, and cutting budgets wherever they can.

However, considering that consumers are now scrutinizing their choice in purchases far more than in our bull market days of the past, smart advertising that focuses on results will be key. Advertisers looking to invest their marketing dollars in '09 will look for more aggressive fee models without compromising results, creativity, or ingenuity in their marketing and advertising strategies.

While larger advertising agencies may offer big names, award-winning work, and departmentalized experts, they often come with inflexible, high price tags. Advertisers can find significant cost savings by choosing a more moderate moderate-sized agency that can offer more organic staffing and pricing models. Additionally, an agency with less-traditional business models is more likely to have more experience developing aggressive campaign strategies and compelling programs that drive revenue at the bottom line.

Shannon Morris, president of Sigma Group (65 employees) says, "You don't have to sacrifice good, smart, strategic creative and media products by working with an agency our size. We are finding that larger brands who did not look at midsized agencies in the past are looking to make their dollars work harder and are turning to a more approachable midsized agency offering all of the same services...but perhaps less bells and whistles. A more 'no-nonsense' approach to well-executed media and marketing plans."

Advertising budgets are often put at risk because dollars are not nailed down and can be pulled at the last minute. When companies are in crisis and feeling the crunch, ad dollars will often be sacrificed. However, when we are faced with consumers who are not only spending less but taking more time to make purchase decisions, smart strategic advertising can make a huge impact come purchasing time.

Morris adds, "We work with lean operating budgets, so we can (and do) eliminate un-needed expenditures--which means a better bottom line for our clients. And, we can function organically, taking on accounts that require an investment on our part so that we can see a return in the longer run. Because of our size, we can be more flexible with pricing as companies and brands kind of 'wait it out' and see what happens with the economy. We see it more as an opportunity than a limitation because we have the bandwidth and experience of moving products at the field level (dealers, retailers, etc.). It's a grass roots approach to making a difference. At this point we are working on maintaining and positioning ourselves as the more relevant choice for this economy."

Founded in 1986, Sigma Group is a full-service advertising agency specializing in carrying brands into well-strategized, holistic, and integrated marketing platforms that capitalize on the relevant convergence between digital media and marketing to drive bottom-line growth. Recent campaigns include established brands such as Panasonic, DeLonghi, MasterCard, PoggenPohl, Hunter Douglas and others. www.sigmagroup.com