

## Live From Worldwide AdForum, New York, Day 1

### Day 1, Monday

The morning starts with most people dragging their jetlag behind them yet excited enough to prop their eyelids open with toothpicks so as not to miss anything. There are 30 consultants here from 25 companies representing 13 countries. With that scope, it's fair to say the chances of having an awkward silence in the conversation are slim to none. We meet in the lobby of the fabulous Hotel Gansevoort where we're staying, quickly compare which lucky sods got the rooms with Hudson river views, then head to the first stop; Mediabrands.

Mediabrands is a new unit combining Interpublic Group's media planning and buying companies – the largest of which are Universal McCann, Initiative and Magna, but including several other diversified agencies. Ex-UM guy Nick Brien is now captaining this ship as President and CEO, and mutterings from my colleagues suggest that despite what's deemed to be a tough navigation job ahead, he's the right guy to do it.

An impressive presenter, his view of the business as one of 'change management' given the rapid pace of change in the media and advertising landscape was an interesting one. It of course won't be the last time we hear about this rapidly shifting landscape over the week, nor the last time we see the combining of media entities such as this one, but he's the one who's actually defined his business by it. The interesting part will be to see how these separate entities can be brought together to do more than share back office operations and IN-TE-GRATE. There's that word again. The presentation from Universal McCann on 'Curiosity' shows they are on the same page for this strategic move, Initiative showed something less than their namesake, but then again it was early on a Monday morning...

The afternoon session is Leo Burnett's and albeit they had some nice consumer insights in the work, were a perfect example that if you're not already looking for where and who your consumer is in three years' time you already seem three years behind your competition. The challenge for the big networks seems to be how they will restructure their 'analog Titanics', to be able to move as fast as the digital environment and as nimbly as their native digital competition.

One of these such agencies is the future-focused Sapient, who host us for dinner at the new Bowery Museum which it has to be said offers a fairly sexy view of a very sexy city. These guys are the 'digital indigenous' of which the benefit shows. A great pure play shop with a digital consultancy heritage and a more recent move into interactive, their work shows an innovation heartland that starts with online at the core vs sticky taping it on to the end.

After that it was definitely time to let the eyelids have their say and succumb to the jetlag, as there was a distinct feeling in the air that the combination of sleep deprivation and sensory overload might well and truly be the order of the week...