

# OPINION 1

## Canny move might have put Carat in SIA spotlight

The Singapore Airlines creative review has administered a much-needed kick up the rear of Singapore's humdrum advertising scene. But the short-list, when it was finally released over a week ago, was an anti-climax. The usual suspects were all on it (Euro RSCG and Grey are exceptions) but, with eight agencies competing, the list cannot fairly be described as short.

More interesting are those who didn't make the list, Carat in particular. Of course no one, not even Carat itself, would have expected a client like Singapore Airlines (not the most risk-happy marketing machine) to take a punt on a media agency to lead a creative brief. But Carat's decision to answer SIA's request for information is shrewd. The airline has hinted that it will review media (currently handled by MEC) after it has appointed a creative agency — probably in six months. So Carat was wise to get in early, well before the media tender is issued.

Carat's move is also a statement of intent. It is one of Asia's youngest — and smallest — media networks. And to make serious headway, says Aegis's regional CEO Patrick Stahle, it needs to behave like a challenger brand: brazen, hungry and progressive. It, like every other self-respecting media shop in town, wants to take the lead in the increasingly competitive communications planning arena, and pitching for SIA is a neat way to plant its stake in the soil. Media — or rather, channel planning (as it is fashionably known) — should be done before creative, Stahle argues. Which is why Carat politely suggested that Singapore Airlines has got its priorities wrong.

## Wunderman puts faith in acquisition

By 2000, Wunderman had acquired a number of agencies, but it was not until the acquisition of...

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