

Media

JOB OF THE WEEK
Grayling PR seeks director for blue chip client portfolio
Page 29

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In this issue



CRM Big brands take a bite out of the digital option

Paying for meals via your mobile phone is now a real possibility. But do consumers really care?

Page 11

BROADCASTING India's GEC channels fight to keep viewers

The good times may be over for general entertainment channels, thanks to clutter and stagnancy.

Page 12



PROFILE Lofty ambitions keep AirAsia CEO flying high

Tony Fernandes' daring plans to make the low-cost carrier a winner are the talk of the region.

Page 14

FEATURE Japan embarks on a new brand mission

The Land of the Rising Sun is re-inventing cool — again. But can it get global branding right?

Page 20

Regulars

Readers' Picks	5
Planet Media	11
Double Standards	12
Vox Pop	13
Chatter	14
Brand Health Check	15
Adwatch	16
24 Hours With...	16
Letters to the Editor	17
Perspective	18
The Work	22
Private View	24



Coke Zero eyes A-P push

Roster agencies prepare to pitch for soft drink giant's new regional brand brief

By Robin Hicks

ASIA-PACIFIC Coca-Cola is briefing its key roster agencies ahead of a regional pitch for new zero-sugar brand Coke Zero.

The Coke Zero regional project follows the launch of the brand in Hong Kong and Taiwan last month, and will support earlier launches in Korea and Australia. Key roster agencies for Coca-Cola's carbonated drinks business are believed to be involved, which include McCann Erickson and Ogilvy & Mather. However, other Coke roster shops — M&C Saatchi, Euro RSCG, Lowe, Publicis and Leo Burnett — have not been invited to pitch.

Agencies have until to the second week of April to prepare presentations, to be made at Coca-Cola's regional headquarters in Hong Kong.

To date, launch campaigns for Coke Zero have varied considerably by market. The brand courted controversy in Australia last year when it used an unbranded blog named 'The zero movement', while in the UK Girls Aloud singer Cheryl Tweedy fronted



Coca-Cola...regional Zero plans to follow earlier launches in Korea, Australia and Hong Kong

the launch TV campaign.

Coke Zero is Coca-Cola's sugar-free brand targeted at men who avoid Coke Light because of its association with dieting women.

The development comes as brand Coke pitches a China activation project around its sponsorship of the Beijing

2008 Olympics torch relay.

The Coke China activation pitch is believed to involve several mainland activation agencies, including an unlikely partnership between JWT partner Always, and Ogilvy Action. Coke's current activation partners include Momentum, which sits inside its

dedicated Red Lounge unit in China, and US agency Ignition. It is further believed that Ignition played an integral role in the R3-managed pitch selection process, which reportedly concluded as *Media* went to press.

Additional reporting by Arun Sudhaman

J&J reviews global media assignment

GLOBAL Johnson & Johnson (J&J) has confirmed that it is reviewing its US\$3 billion global media buying and planning business, putting Interpublic Group agencies Universal McCann and Initiative on alert in Asia-Pacific.

Universal McCann holds the bulk of the business in the region, along with MediaCom in India and OMD in China.

"Johnson & Johnson is a sophisticated marketer, so it is looking for an equally sophisticated agency that combines qualitative and quantitative leadership," said Greg Paull, principal of R3, which is handling the Asia-Pacific component of the review.

The process also includes Pfizer Consumer Healthcare's media, after J&J acquired the business last year. Regionally, MindShare holds Pfizer planning duties, while IPG handles buying. Total Asia-Pacific media spend is estimated at US\$300 million.

MTR asks shops to re-pitch Dream City

By James Murphy

HONG KONG MTR's property development team has sent the three creative agencies shortlisted for its mammoth Dream City project back to the drawing board and brought in at least another two, after initial presentations were reportedly below par.

DDB, Y&R and DraftFCB were shortlisted for the account, believed to be worth more than HK\$30 million (US\$3.8 million) in adspend after an initial briefing and tender process. But *Media* has learned MTR's review team, led by Emily Chan, deputy GM, property development, and Phyllis Tong in procurement, were unhappy with the standard of creative work presented. MTR has since approached several other 4As agencies to enter the pitch. At least two, M&C Saatchi and McCann Erickson, are understood to have accepted the brief, with presentations due in mid-April.

MTR chiefs had not responded to requests for comment at *Media*'s presstime.

Pitcher bids farewell to JWT and the industry

By Arun Sudhaman

ASIA-PACIFIC JWT Asia-Pacific South CEO Patrick Pitcher has confirmed that he is leaving the agency, in a move that marks his departure from the agency sector after 25 years.

Pitcher leaves JWT three years after taking on the position. "I am very happy with what I have accomplished here in terms of restructuring the region, and in terms of our creative and financial performance," he said.

His departure follows the relocation of JWT International president Michael Maedel from London to Singapore in 2006. Industry observers noted that the overlap between their roles made Pitcher's move "inevitable".



Pitcher...overlap with international president Michael Maedel

Maedel confirmed that Pitcher's position would not be filled. "One of the advantages is that with me being here, we can move to a much flatter structure," he said.

Pitcher arrived at JWT shortly after departing his regional CEO role at Saatchi & Saatchi, where he spent 22 years. His departure comes as JWT India ECD Bruce

Matchett — a Pitcher appointee — leaves the agency, with former David chairman Josy Paul coming on board to take his position. In a separate development, JWT China has inked a strategic alliance with Shanghai PR firm Zenith, which will see the two share revenue on work referred by the WPP agency. "They have a strategic capability that we can help them develop," said JWT Northeast Asia area director Tom Dotoroff. "Given the right circumstances, we would be interested in pursuing a deeper financial relationship." It is also believed that JWT is currently pursuing other acquisitions in Beijing, Vietnam and India.