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SIA... a media pitch is expected to take place by March 2008, as part of a periodical review of the airline's suppliers

TBWA lands SIA business

Omnicom agency beats sister shop DDB and Publicis for US\$60 million brief

By Robin Hicks

SINGAPORE TBWA has pipped Publicis and DDB to win the S\$100 million (US\$60 million) creative review for Singapore Airlines (SIA), arguably Asia's most prestigious account.

The Omnicom agency triumphed after a four-round contest, managed by R3, that began in January, when Saatchi & Saatchi, Leo Burnett, BatesAsia, Publicis, TBWA, DDB and Y&R were invited to pitch, as well as incumbent Batey, which loses control of the brand it helped create 35 years ago.

A final round saw a TBWA shoot-out with Publicis. It was

a closely fought contest but, says sources, TBWA clinched it thanks to a stronger digital offering, better chemistry with the client and a more cohesive understanding of the brand.

TBWA's sister agency Tequila handles SIA's loyalty business KrisFlyer — won in 2004 — which is also thought to have given TBWA an advantage. The agencies are closely integrated — its creative teams sit on the same floor — but the two accounts are expected to be handled separately.

TBWA had yet to be briefed at presstime, so the terms of the contract were unclear. But Batey is expected to



Brett... brand cohesion

hand over over the business next month. Philip Brett, chairman, TBWA/Tequila Singapore declined to comment on whether the agency trumpeted its 'Disruption' mantra, but said: "We played to our strengths. It was the

perfect model of how a network should work: we brought in creative firepower from our key hubs — people were on a plane within minutes. "This win means a huge amount. It's almost 10 years to the day since we launched (in Singapore), and five years since we brought Tequila and TBWA closer together."

SIA's EVP, marketing, Huang Cheng Eng, said in a statement that the Singapore Girl would remain an "iconic personification" of the brand.

The appointment does not affect the airline's media duties, handled by MEC, although a review, sources say, is expected by March 2008.

Creative clash sees BBH drop Tiger Singapore

By Arun Sudhman

SINGAPORE After just four months, BBH has decided to resign as Tiger Beer Singapore's creative AOR, with sources pointing to friction between Asia Pacific Breweries' (APB) local and regional teams.

APB Singapore assistant GM for marketing Erik Van Vulpen declined to comment on the company's regional team but said that his local

team was happy with BBH's work. "Definitely, there were no complaints from us about the quality of the work or the passion of BBH," he said. "It is a very good agency."

It is believed that the BBH creative idea, supported by the local client, was ultimately rejected by APB regional. While Tiger is a mass-market brand in Singapore, the regional team is thought to be considerably more focused on

a premium brand image.

Meanwhile, the brand is set to roll out a new regional TV campaign developed by new regional AOR Saatchi & Saatchi Malaysia, although it remains unclear whether the spot will air in Singapore.

Van Vulpen also declined to comment on whether the local Singapore business, estimated at S\$10 million (US\$6.6 million), would now shift into Saatchi's, or would be

put up for pitch again. Last year's creative review saw Tiger incumbent BBDO displaced after a six-month process that included 22 contenders.

Meanwhile, APB has reportedly appointed Edmund Neo as its new regional director for group commercial, allowing Les Buckley to focus on the Southeast Asia and Oceania markets.

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Euro RSCG tightens grip on Dell regional

ASIA-PACIFIC Dell is poised to consolidate its regional advertising and media business with incumbent Euro RSCG, displacing Australia and New Zealand incumbent DDB and Hakuhodo in Japan.

The agency, according to sources, took the brief after presentations in seven markets over a two-week period and a regional battle in Singapore earlier this month. (Media, 9 February).

Euro RSCG already handles Dell's advertising business in China, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Malaysia and Taiwan, and adds the markets currently serviced by DDB. Media will be handled by Euro sister agency MPG.

Meanwhile, Huawei Technologies has selected Euro RSCG to launch a major new global branding initiative, after a pitch that reportedly included three other agencies. The project will focus on building the brand globally.

O2 poised to select advertising partner

By Sara Yin

ASIA-PACIFIC O2 Asia-Pacific is poised to select one of its roster agencies — TBWA or M&C Saatchi — to handle its regional above-the-line advertising business.

According to Sanjay Sabnani, O2 Asia-Pacific's new VP of marketing and branding, the PDA maker "wanted to be more focused with one (agency)".

The change is not expected to affect its media incumbent, Starcom, though Sabnani added that the company was "constantly reviewing its agencies".

According to sources, most of O2's marketing communications thus far have been below-the-line. However the BT-owned manufacturer has announced plans to push out several new models this year, following aggressive product launches last year from its chief rival, BlackBerry.

Sabnani joined O2 in January, filling a gap left by the departure of six-year O2 veteran, Pei Wen Wong (Media, 2 June 2006).