

PR Week
04 May 2007

Top 50 Consumer consultancies

Fee income for the top 50 consumer agencies broke through the £100m barrier in 2006. **Alex Black** reports

The year 2006 was, by most accounts, a strong one for the consumer sector. Most of the agencies in *PRWeek's* Top 50 consumer consultancies league table experienced fee income growth – some, such as Nelson Bostock, as high as 151 per cent (see profile, page 27). Overall, consumer fee income rose by just over 11 per cent for the top 50 consumer agencies, breaking through the £100m barrier for the first time.

There are 13 agencies new to the 2006 table, the highest placed of which is Talk PR (see box on next page).

A quick glance at the top 10 throws up two agencies that the majority of the industry would not instinctively call 'consumer' agencies: Geronimo Communications and Lansons Com-

munications. The former, which topped the consumer table last year as well, estimates 85 per cent of its fee income comes from consumer-facing work, the majority of it for public sector clients.

Lansons (up one place from last year to eighth, usually thought of as a financial sector specialist, but joint MD Ian Williams points out about half its income comes from consumer work. 'Our consumer cent] is down to a conscious strategy,' Williams explains. 'Lansons has built a reputation as the leading agency for financial services, but it's hard to keep squeezing growth from one sector. You have to offer a range of services.'

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ant year for the consumer sector, tighter procurement and recruitment problems have dogged agency chiefs. Shine Communications's MD Rachel Bell says an industry shortage of account managers was heightened last year by a double whammy of agencies compet-

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'Our consumer growth [of 17 per cent] is down to a conscious strategy,' Williams explains. 'Lansons has built a reputation as the leading agency for financial services, but it's hard to keep squeezing growth from one sector. You have to offer a range of services.'

The agency has managed to get consumer work from existing clients such

as online payment service PayPal as well as new 'pure' consumer accounts such as the findmypast.com group of websites.

Another big leap in the top 10 comes from Exposure Promotions, which was beaten only by Geronimo. Exposure is the highest placed of the agencies that only double-digit growth.

Far from being a specialist, Exposure CEO Ian Williams says the agency includes a range of services, including financial services, public relations and crisis management.



Ian Williams: 'range of services'

Although 2006 was generally a buoy-

TOP 50 1-15

| Rank | Company | 2006 Fee Income (£m) | 2005 Fee Income (£m) | % Change | 2006 Client Satisfaction | 2005 Client Satisfaction | 2006 Profit (£m) | 2005 Profit (£m) | 2006 Profit % | 2005 Profit % | Head Office |
|------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1 | Geronimo Communications | 7,157 | 6,358 | 12.6 | 85 | 85 | 1,400 | 1,200 | 19.6 | 18.9 | London |
| 2 | Exposure Promotions | 6,358 | 5,600 | 13.4 | 85 | 85 | 1,200 | 1,000 | 18.9 | 17.9 | London |
| 3 | The Red Consultancy | 6,017 | 5,393 | 11.5 | 85 | 85 | 1,000 | 900 | 16.6 | 16.7 | London |
| 4 | Edelman | 5,393 | 4,800 | 12.4 | 85 | 85 | 900 | 800 | 16.7 | 16.7 | London |
| 5 | Lexis Public Relations | 5,119 | 4,600 | 11.3 | 85 | 85 | 800 | 700 | 15.6 | 15.2 | London |
| 6 | Trimedia Harrison Cowley* | 5,092 | 4,600 | 10.7 | 85 | 85 | 700 | 600 | 13.7 | 13.0 | London |
| 7 | Cake | 4,647,000 | 3,906,000 | 18.9 | 41 | 33 | 4,847,000 | 100 | 58 | 100 | London |
| 8 | Lansons Communications | 3,763,663 | 3,215,618 | 17.1 | 20 | 17 | 7,527,326 | 50 | 106 | 100 | London |
| 9 | Talk PR | 3,128,000 | NEWENTRY | N/A | 60 | N/A | 3,224,000 | 97 | 27 | N/A | London |
| 10 | Frank Public Relations | 3,062,419 | 2,300,749 | 33.1 | 64 | 33 | 3,062,419 | 100 | 46 | 100 | London |
| 11 | Shine Communications | 2,780,860 | 2,771,060 | 0.3 | 68 | 0 | 2,780,860 | 100 | 40 | 100 | London |
| 12 | IAS Smarts (formerly Citigate Smarts) | 2,395,158 | NEWENTRY | N/A | 47 | N/A | 4,141,751 | 58 | 68 | N/A | London |
| 13 | Colman Getty PR | 2,318,850 | 1,617,800 | 43.3 | 72 | 43 | 2,576,500 | 90 | 31 | 90 | London |
| 14 | Purple Public Relations | 2,187,522 | 1,844,800 | 18.6 | 81 | 19 | 2,187,522 | 100 | 36 | 100 | London |
| 15 | Ptarmigan Consultants | 2,101,081 | 2,129,967 | -1.4 | 71 | -1 | 2,580,482 | 81 | 50 | 81 | Leeds |

All figures relate to year ended December 2006. Fee income = PR fees plus mark-up. All figures are gathered from forms submitted to *PRWeek* for Top 150 consultancies report
*Trimedia Communications and Harrison Cowley were listed as separate agencies last year prior to merger