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BY DAN MONK



INSIDER

Dan Monk

Boot firm, other new clients help Strata-G walk hot path

Power tools, cheese coney and sheepskin boots.

These are the basic building blocks of the public relations practice at Strata-G Communications. With several new accounts and a growing reputation in the building-products industry, the downtown-based advertising agency is poised to cross the million-dollar mark in public relations revenue.

That puts it in the top five among local PR firms. The practice now accounts for 10 percent of Strata-G's total revenue of about \$9 million.

"We grew about 40 percent in 2006. So far in '07, we're up another 30 percent. Our goal is that we could be a strong No. 2 in this market," said Jon Reischel, director of the public relations shop at Strata-G.

Reischel, a University of Michigan alum, worked in the local PR shops at Northlich and HSR Business to Business before landing at Strata-G in January 2006. He sees PR as a "door opener" for other agency services.

"If you do it right, you'll go to a PR client and help them identify key messages and target audiences," he said.

Such was the case at Warmbat Australia, a Dayton-based importer of sheepskin

boots that hired Strata-G to line up a media tour for a footwear line launched last summer. Founded by Perth native Paul Barclay, it competes against Deckers Outdoor Corp., whose Ugg boots, made popular by California surfers, have evolved into a \$182 million brand. Reischel said many of Deckers' competitors produce cheaper knock-off versions. Barclay decided to compete at a higher price point, emphasizing quality and innovative designs. A year after its launch, Warmbat Australia is projecting 2007 revenue of \$3 million.

Strata-G placed stories emphasizing quality in Oprah Winfrey's magazine and *Redbook*, along with retail trade journals. The client was impressed enough to expand to include advertising.

"They're able to make things happen quickly," said Robin Laughlin, executive vice president of sales at Warmbat Australia.

With 10 employees and 16 PR clients, Strata-G still has a ways to go before it catches up with larger competitors. HSR, for example, reports 20 PR staffers. And Cincinnati's largest ad agency, Northlich, has the largest PR practice, with about three dozen employees and \$4.6 million in revenue.



Reischel

Got a tip for Insider? E-mail Dan Monk at dmonk@bizjournals.com or call him at (513) 337-9438.