

Media Buying Briefing: While not a return to rebundling, indie media and creative shops are winning business together



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FEBRUARY 1, 2021 by [MICHAEL BÜRGI](#)

The recent news that independent creative agency Mother was [launching its own media arm](#), Media by Mother, represents just the latest crest in a wave of joint efforts by media and creative agencies to win business and deliver better results for clients.

For example, in the past month, independent media agency Mediassociates teamed with creative agency Mojo Supermarket to land a renewable energy company that's about to launch. For Mediassociates, partnering with creative agencies is now a primary business development strategy. **"In the past year of our new business revenue, 50% to 60% of that has come through agency partnerships,"** said Todd Engels, who leads client development at Mediassociates.

Meantime, Worldwide Partners, a collective of media, creative, digital and social shops, has been fielding more requests than ever for custom agency solutions from multi-national clients. Those partnerships led in a few recent cases to success that the individual agencies may not have been achieved on their own.

For example, two Worldwide Partners shops, media agency R&R Partners and creative agency Odysseus Arms, jointly won the U.S. rollout of Self Financial, a consumer financial app. They're hunting together for other wins as well.

Fletcher Whitwell, R&R's chief media & publishing officer, laid out how having Odysseus Arms at its side helps: "The biggest thing that they do for us is, as creatives are getting briefed, is making sure ... that the connectivity between media and creative — is going to work. Oftentimes previously, creative would be parallel pathing while media-wise there was no connectivity and you'd get to the end of the plan ... that's where we found that it's highly critical to connect creative and media upfront and really understand the audience, because that helps creatives as well."

Added Libby Brockhoff, OA's co-founder and creative director, "We have to have a partner that has this cross-platform specialty that Fletcher's people [have] that most media companies don't."

John Harris, president of Worldwide Partners, noted that it's not the first time R&R and OA have won business together — they landed work jointly on Farmer's Insurance's millennial offshoot called Toggle, beating out 12 other agencies pitching, including a few holding company shops.

"The whole reason that this network exists is to give independent agencies a framework for collaboration," said Harris. "And the reason it's worked so well is that the acquisition and consolidation that you see in the holding companies doesn't translate to collaboration. It doesn't translate to integration. Their incentives aren't in place to drive that collaboration."