



Across-the-Board Offerings

An Interview with Michael Roth, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc.

EDITORS' NOTE Prior to his appointment as Chairman in July 2004, Michael Roth had been a member of Interpublic's board since 2002. He added his CEO title in January 2005. Before assuming these roles, Roth was Chairman and CEO of the financial services holding company, the MONY Group. A certified public accountant and the recipient of an LL.M. degree from New York University Law School and a JD from the Boston University School of Law, Roth sits on the boards of directors of Pitney Bowes, Gaylord Entertainment, the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, the Baruch College Fund, the Partnership for New York City, and Enterprise Foundation.



Michael Roth

COMPANY BRIEF Founded in 1961 and headquartered in New York, the Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (www.interpublic.com), is one of the world's leading advertising and marketing companies. From general advertising agencies like the Martin Agency in Richmond, Virginia, to the Hong Kong office of special-events marketer Jack Morton, to the Sydney office of sports marketer Octagon, Interpublic agencies span the globe, employing 43,000 people in more than 100 countries.

Has Interpublic's business been affected by this economy, and are you optimistic for growth for the brand?

I'm optimistic because of the resources we have – there are so many media opportunities and so many ways of communicating with consumers. Consumers are in control, and we have to help our clients reach them. We bring in all the different resources we have available, whether it's mobile, digital, outdoor traditional, or Internet, and we put them together in an integrated way.

Is Interpublic best described as an advertising communications company?

It's a marketing communications company. Advertising is a critical component but, in addition, we do public relations, event marketing, sports marketing, digital, and media. Clients are looking for companies that can provide across-the-board offerings to help them accomplish what they have to do.

How important is global strength?

It's critical. One of the benefits of being



a global company with different resources and marketing service opportunities is when one part of the world is having difficulty, another is doing well. We're seeing that now. We haven't seen any major pullbacks yet in this difficult environment. Whatever pullbacks

there are, they're by sector, whether in financial services, some parts of retailing, or geographic. The benefit of being a global company is that we participate in the growth markets around the world, such as India, China, Brazil, or Russia. Our global footprint helps ensure our stability.

Is it important that Interpublic agencies are known as Interpublic companies, or are they independent entities with their own brand power?

There's no question that the power of our independents is in their own brands. But, at the same time, the resources of Interpublic are behind them and this helps them gain and maintain a competitive edge.

Can mid-sized companies survive in this market, or do you need to be larger and global?

If a company's client base expands on a global basis, they have to be able to deliver. But mid-sized companies have been around for a long time and they will continue to be around. They may just have more difficulty bringing all the necessary resources to bear when a situation arises.

It seems we're learning as we go in some areas of technology. Is it difficult to determine the future of these areas?

What's hot now will be old stuff six months from now. We have an emerging media lab in Los Angeles, which provides us an opportunity to bring in clients to see what the new media is about and to experiment. It's incumbent upon us to stay ahead of the curve; that's what our clients expect. We don't know what the future holds, but we have to be able to respond as it develops. Mobile is a perfect example. For the first time, in 2007, the Internet was accessed more from mobile phones and mobile devices than traditional computers – that tells

you something. Five years from now, there will be something else. We have to continue to build our knowledge base in this area.

How important is having the metrics in place to track results?

There are three pillars of growth in this environment: First, you have to have the digital capability; second, you have to have the accountability metrics to show that what you're doing is working; and third is integration – you have to be able to bring everything to the marketplace. Putting that all together makes those three pillars critical for success.

How critical is community focus and corporate responsibility to Interpublic's culture?

Giving the company a culture of inclusion and community presence was a major component when I came onboard. We do a lot of pro bono work with the Ad Council, and our companies support many organizations in the communities where they operate. We're starting to measure that, and we contribute a lot in terms of our resources, which is helpful from a recruiting point of view, because people like to participate in these types of programs.

How critical is the public/private partnership, and has it been effective?

It's important to have a forum where business leaders can communicate what's important to their clients and their businesses, and to have an organization that's effective. Those who belong to and are active in the Partnership for New York City have the best interests in mind for their companies, their constituency, and the city.

You took on this role at a challenging time. Has the business progressed the way you expected?

In 2007, we put all the issues of the "beleaguered" Interpublic behind us. I'm delighted with the progress our company has made. We have more work to do, but for now we're focused on normal business issues like the competitive environment, providing resources, and being the best we can be. ●

Interpublic's New York headquarters