

# Joining Forces



**After an acquisition and merger in 2009, this advertising agency increased its digital presence, enhancing traditional services and making clients very happy, says Kathy Delaney.**

**A**dvertising agencies today have more tools at their disposal than ever before when it comes to creating concepts and connecting with consumers. Although covering every inch of the industry is a daunting task, SapientNitro is proving it can do exactly that.

“Brands can’t survive today without truly integrated digital and traditional marketing services with a big brand essence at the core,” said Kathy Delaney, president and chief creative officer. “Our traditional, digital and e-commerce services are helping our clients see the whole picture when it comes to growing their brands and creating loyal advocates.”

SapientNitro came together after Sapient announced its acquisition of Nitro Group last June, making history by being the first digital agency to buy a traditional advertising shop. Both were global companies, as Nitro was a global communications network with seven offices and Sapient was a global services firm with a focus on digital marketing and a strong technology heritage.

Nitro’s approach was to blend communications with business strategy, and brand-led thinking across offline channels. Sapient, the largest independent digital agency, had a distinct focus on interactive services such as brand and marketing strategy, creative work, Web design and e-commerce development, with an expertise in emerging media. Together, the two

companies united to create a dominant force in multi-channel marketing and commerce, providing clients with holistic marketing services all under one roof.

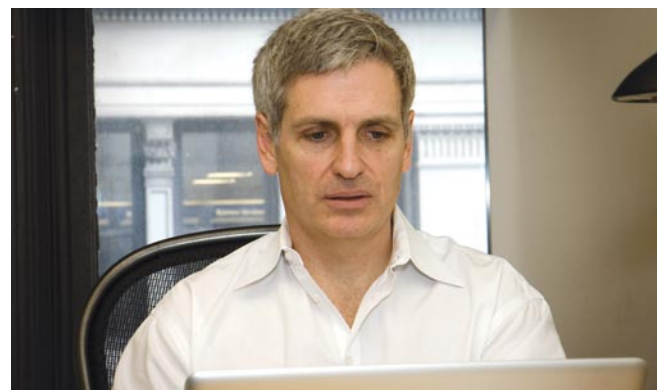
Both Sapient and Nitro have proven their ability to customers of all kinds. Nitro clients have included Mars, Volvo, Nike, and Footlocker; it was also behind the “Best Job in the World” campaign for the Queensland Tourist Commission in Australia, the most awarded campaign at the Cannes Lions in 2009. Sapient’s clients have included companies like Citibank, Coca-Cola, Rolling Stone, and Target.

Today, Sapient operates as Sapient Interactive and a consulting arm called Global Markets, with SapientNitro the third and newest piece of the Sapient family. All told, there are 35 offices worldwide in locations including New York, London, Australia, Shanghai, Russia, and Dubai.

“We operate across office lines as we have several large, global accounts. We have global strategies that are implemented through different regions and offices,” said Delaney. “We make local adaptations for those brands, but there are global strategies that cross over and flow between the offices.”

## Sensible connection

The reason behind the acquisition was to take advantage of the commitment each company had to business strategy and innovation through customer communication, content delivery, and digital solutions. Technology has changed the way consumers interact with brands, and traditional media and advertising techniques are no longer the only way customers





and brands connect. By leveraging the strength of its multi-disciplinary teams and combining capabilities in advertising, digital commerce, marketing technology, and social media, SapientNitro believes it can present solutions to clients and create brand loyalty in a way no other agency can because of its experience and by placing consumer brand strategy at its core.

“We can articulate that strategy through traditional communications, interactive channels, and commerce,” Delaney said. “Clients are increasingly asking one agency to solve all of their problems because they see the value in working with one brand steward that can do everything.”

The reality is that people are consuming media in a much different fashion today. They may see an ad on TV, go online for more information if they are interested in the product, go to brick-and-mortar store to buy something, and then talk about the product with others through social media sites. Because the nature of the conversation between consumer and product has changed, it is important for many companies to have a partner like SapientNitro, an entity capable of working in virtually any industry, creating great ideas and demonstrating big brand thinking, and exploding brands across different channels in different ways.

“We are pretty diverse in terms of the companies we work with,” said Delaney. “We are an ambitious agency. We love to take on challenges. The thrill of creatively solving tough business and marketing problems is what drives us.”

One benefit to clients of having one partner in charge of brand strategy activities is that the client doesn't have to act

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as a chief integration officer and bring multiple parties onto the same page. Says Delaney, “When working with ad holding companies, trying to get integration is like herding cats.” Instead, SapientNitro's clients can work with one agency that provides fully integrated communications solutions, is efficient, dedicated to understanding their business, and committed to their financial success.

Delaney said the company is always looking to be

where clients need SapientNitro the most, so there are additional markets where it wants to open offices. The company will continue to look for partnerships in many industries, because Delaney said offering cross-platform and cross-channel capabilities allows SapientNitro to serve just about anybody.

Still inside the first year of its new identity, continuing to raise the bar in terms of creativity is one of SapientNitro's top priorities. Getting potential clients to see the value of the company's full service and the efficiencies that come along with that will be a big factor in determining SapientNitro's future success. But the reality is that the way companies and brands interact with consumers has fundamentally changed. SapientNitro is ahead of the game because of its understanding of how to shape the conversation in a way that will help clients create unshakeable brand loyalty.

“What makes us really different is the fact that we offer a cutting-edge full offering across multi-channels and multi-platforms,” said Delaney. “We don't insist each client use all of our capabilities. Instead, we dig in to understand client needs, put brand strategy at the core, then figure out which levers they need to pull in order to be successful.” ★

—Eric Slack

