



## Two heads are better

### Saatchi & Saatchi executive team fosters synergy

**Diane Francis, Financial Post**

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Since 2004, Saatchi & Saatchi's executive team of CEO Mary Baglivo and chief creative officer Tony Granger have grown the firm's New York and Canadian profits and the client list. She is one of the industry's highest-ranking women and a well-tailored executive who runs the business side of the operation. Her partner, Mr. Granger, is a chirpy South African who dresses in black jeans and jokingly refers to himself as a "failed musician." Saatchi worldwide is enormous, with 7,000 employees in 84 countries. It is owned by The Publicis Group of Paris. Mrs. Baglivo has a seat on Saatchi's Worldwide Executive Board. The two took over the helm in 2004 and within days 17 top executives who sided with their predecessor had left. The firm has gone from success to success. Both sat down recently with the Post to talk about their company and industry.

Q To what do you attribute your turnaround?

A "This is a partnership between Tony and me and is part of the culture of S&S," Mrs. Baglivo said. "This has been important for the transformation of the agency. You need strong, inspirational, creative leadership to collaborate with the business leader. We finish each other's sentences."

"New clients include J.C. Penney, Sony Ericsson, financial services firm Ameriprise, pharmaceutical companies such as Novartis and Bristol Myers and technology, telephone, fashion and retail outfits such as BASF. It's not bad for a big boat turnaround. We have become nimble and can offer deep strategic insights, global reach. Clients want this."

Q What was the main focus?

A "S&S specialized in packaged goods advertising. Procter & Gamble's, for instance. Now we have added financial services, telephony, fashion, retail, technology and B2B sectors."

Q How do you divide responsibilities?

A "The challenge," Mr. Granger said, "is to keep spontaneity in the work as we go through the long process of doing it, tweaking it and focusing, then changing, It's very hard to keep enthusiasm and freshness. We are an ideas company not an ad agency. Advertising is a small element. Ideas come first then we create whatever is needed to drive that idea. That means we also create products."

Q Give us an example of how the work has changed to be multi-platformed.

A "We worked for Procter & Gamble's Folgers Coffee, which is the top-selling coffee in the United States," she said. "They wanted to attract younger consumers to Folgers as a point of entry from Starbucks. We decided that coffee was part of waking up and making the mornings tolerable. We decided not to use paid media, so we created neat screen savers, personal wake-up calls. These were picked up on the blogosphere and YouTube [Internet sites] and the mainstream media. It was viral and successful."

Q How is your agency compensated these days?

A "The compensation models these days vary," she said. "There's payment based on a percentage of sales, fees or even by receiving stock in start-ups, which is not common. We like incentive compensation a lot because we have skin in the game and it's based on achievement of results."

Q Tony, what's unique about Saatchi & Saatchi?

A "Lovemarks, brands and super-evolved brands that connect to your emotion and heart rather than your head. Brands that demand impulsive loyalty. Another distinct difference is our motto, 'One Team, One Dream.' This means that all the creative directors know one another. The tribes can collaborate and pull in people from everywhere."

Q Mary, your worldwide CEO Kevin Roberts told me in a recent interview that he believed 70% of the advertising business would be female. What do you think?

A "Women will continue to be the ones that buy the consumer goods, but in addition their purchases of autos and technology are going way up. There are more women chief information officers in companies and the [chief marketing officer] population includes many more women. Twenty years ago, there were none. It's definitely changing."

Q Is it difficult resolving issues among hundreds of creative people?

A "Differences of opinion can always be resolved if you get everyone into a room. Transparency and practicality create opportunities to improve," she said. "This is an eclectic business. No one ever decides to be this. Everybody is something else and knows that this is a 'we' business."

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