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Saatchi Opens Green Consultancy

New Unit Stems From Publicis' Act Now Acquisition

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- Making a play to reach more environmentally-conscious consumers, Publicis Groupe today announced its acquisition of green consultancy Act Now Productions.

Under the deal, San Francisco-based Act Now will join the Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide network, and will be redubbed Saatchi & Saatchi S -- not to be confused with Saatchi & Saatchi X, the agency network's shopper-marketing unit, with which the new green consultancy will work in tandem.

Terms of the transaction not disclosed.

Sustainability AOR

The goal of the venture is to establish a "sustainability agency of record for brands," said environmental activist and Act Now CEO Adam Werbach, who will lead the new unit, "as opposed to [environmental sustainability] being a philanthropic or PR afterthought."

Saatchi and its worldwide CEO, Kevin Roberts, had been courting Act Now, launched by Mr. Werbach in 1998, for roughly two years.

Over the past few years, American consumers have become more concerned with environmental issues, because of fears about global warming and checkbook matters such as rising oil prices. By now, most major brands have tried to engage their customers on issues, with varying degrees of success.

In terms of clients, the ad agency network already shared "a lot of very natural overlaps," with Act Now, such as Saatchi's accounts with Wal-Mart

Stores, Procter & Gamble and General Mills, Mr. Werbach said.

Mr. Werbach will now report to Andy Murray, Global CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi X.

Agency offerings

Saatchi S will offer a range of sustainability services to clients, including analysis and strategic advisory, employee engagement, product and brand innovation and consumer retail communication.

Currently, it has offices in San Francisco and Boulder, Colo., with plans to expand this year. Over the next 100 days, Saatchi S plans to open domestic offices in New York, Chicago, and Fayetteville, Ark. (the latter largely related to its Wal-Mart client) as well as international offices in London and Beijing.