



Unique Monthly Visitors: 210,377

April 27, 2015

Hunter Public Relations: Agency Business Report 2015

Hunter PR's yearlong celebration of the company's quarter-century milestone included its third consecutive year of double-digit growth.

Principals: Grace Leong, managing partner; Jonathan Lyon, partner; and Jason Winocour, partner

Ownership: MDC Partners

Office: New York

Revenue: Just above \$20 million

Headcount: 107

Hunter PR's yearlong celebration of the company's quarter-century milestone included its third consecutive year of double-digit growth, says managing partner Grace Leong.

Growing more than 10% to just above the \$20 million range in 2014, the firm's consumer healthcare business saw an uptick of 23% and its food and beverage practice – Hunter PR's bread and butter – increased 12%.

In August of last year, the agency closed the chapter on life as an independent firm, allowing MDC Partners to acquire a majority stake. At the time, Leong said MDC would help Hunter grow its capabilities in social and digital, entertainment marketing, and Hispanic strategy and solutions. MDC Partners' Strategic Marketing Services unit, which contains its PR agencies, reported 12.2% organic 2014 revenue growth over last year.

Much of Hunter's growth in 2014 was aided by bigger budgets from existing clients including McNeil Consumer Healthcare's Zyrtec, Sudafed, and Pepcid in the consumer healthcare practice, and Post Foods and Diageo in its consumer practice.

New client wins include Toms, Premier Nutrition, Motrin – also a McNeil brand – *Mondelez's* Sour Patch Kids brand, Simmons Bedding, and Red Bull. Leong says an element of the firm's "key strategy" is to "be a part of these larger companies and expand our footprint and our reputation."

Seventy percent of growth came from existing clients and fewer than 10% of the agency's clients are on retainer. In July, the firm added former MWW SVP of finance John Ferrari as its inaugural CFO and Dena Martini Toms was named SVP with a focus on Kraft, Mondelez, and McNeil Consumer Healthcare. VPs Marieke Bianchi, Jamie Castaldo, Holly Fussell, and Joe Moscone left Hunter PR last year.

Dearth of senior-level talent

Leong says while the firm sees "hundreds" of résumés from entry-level PR professionals, it gets a lot more scarce climbing the ladder. She notes the PR industry has to look for new ways to achieve a "work-life balance," while ensuring the work does get done.

Leong says she's "really excited" about potential new business coming in.

"There has been some great activity in terms of people reaching out to us," she adds, as well as the Hispanic media relations and strategic council team's continued growth, a unit now made up of six full-time staff in New York and Miami. Last year, Buchanan's Scotch Whisky became the inaugural account exclusive to Hunter Hispanic. Existing clients that expanded work into Hunter Hispanic included Smithfield, Tabasco, Post Foods, Tequila Don Julio, and Johnnie Walker.