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WHAT'S NEXT IN CREATIVE

DESMOND BURROWS, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR

DESCRIBE YOUR AGENCY.

KERN is a full-service CRM agency that applies behavioral sciences to data and drive results—which in human-speak means we use data as a foundation to build messages based on real human insights and an understanding of how people make decisions. This blending of behavioral sciences and precise data has been in our DNA since the agency's beginning.

WHAT TRENDS IS YOUR AGENCY LEADING THE CHARGE ON?

We're really digging deep into the idea of relationships. There are relationships between our clients and their current customers, obviously, but we're also exploring how the relationship evolves from early awareness to acquisition and through the life cycle to win-back communications. So, our take on CRM is really a full-cycle relationship made possible by today's hyperpersonal media.

Another trend that we're focused on is how AR will bring users and technology together. AI is making its way into our homes, and as this expands across the already vast Internet of Things, the relationships we have with smart objects will explode. AR will be the simplest way to interface with and conduct commerce in that new space.

HOW DO CLIENTS PERCEIVE YOUR AGENCY AND THE PEOPLE WHO WORK THERE?

We have a reputation for being quick and responsive. This is a direct result of how much we value relationships. While we talk about the relationships between clients and their customers, we place just as high a value on the relationships we maintain with our clients, as well as the interdepartmental relationships within KERN. When we're all pulling in the same direction, we can be so much more effective—and, frankly, it's just more fun to work that way.

TELL US ABOUT ONE OF YOUR FAVORITE CAMPAIGNS OF 2017.

The work we're doing for DIRECTV NOW really stands out as an example of how we can focus on building strong relationships, turn tremendous volume and end up with a creative product that still makes us smile every time we see it. As AT&T entered

the streaming video arena with DIRECTV NOW, they tasked us with creating messaging for customers that felt as fresh and interesting as their innovative platform. Our dynamic, personalized email stream delivers on the brand promise and offers a large enough platform that we can test and evolve creative in near real-time.

WHAT SEPARATES A GOOD AGENCY FROM A GREAT ONE?

The people. When creative is built in a fun, energized environment, it shows.

HOW HAS YOUR AGENCY EVOLVED OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS?

The entire industry has been in a state of flux for the last few years. That fundamental churn helped stir up an awareness of the importance of data, but left some agencies focused singularly on data and analytics. KERN took that opportunity to hone our already sharp, insight-driven consumer-behavior expertise and amplify it with the data that's becoming ubiquitous in our industry. We're still making communications based on behavioral psychology; we just have more and more data to test and validate our approach.

WHAT'S NEXT?

I think the industry is very close to a resurgence of great creative. As media and channels become blurred and part of our environment, message will rule—and that will drive innovations in creative.

