

MILES NADAL

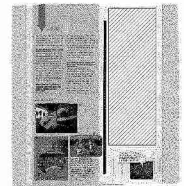
Chairman & CEO, MDC Partners

Nadal is founder, chairman and CEO of the Toronto-based MDC Partners, an advertising, media and marketing holding company that includes the hot shop Crispin Porter + Bogusky (the firm behind Burger King's "Creepy King" and Best Buy's "Buyer be Happy" campaigns). Nadal also founded First Asset Management, one of Canada's largest asset-management firms.

In the past, you've talked about buying more agencies. What kind of agency model do you want to buy today?

Instead of focusing on any single agency model, I believe deeply in our overarching model of perpetual partnership. When we acquire an agency, we never buy a 100 percent share. If an agency has the kind of talent, creativity and success that catches our eye, we like to keep that team intact with a continuing stake in the business. That's why we're always looking for people with what I call "IDEAS"—"Infinite Desire for (Epic) Entrepreneurial Accomplishment." Our acquisition targets evolve according to our needs and those of our clients, along with the specific demands of the marketplace. By seeking out the most talented people and by bringing their intellectual capital into MDC Partners, we will stay sufficiently agile to meet whatever challenges today and tomorrow throw at us.

You've been called a believer



THE WORK



in "constant change." Can you define what that means today?

Change is the only constant you can be assured of, whether you believe in it or not. If you hope to make change your ally, if you hope to deploy new ideas with the kind of speed and agility that will give you a competitive advantage, you need to be part of enacting tomorrow's change instead of reacting to yesterday's. The only way to do that consistently and well is by gaining an appreciation of the hidden, underlying forces driving the trends that are visible to all.

What is the biggest change impacting the advertising industry today?

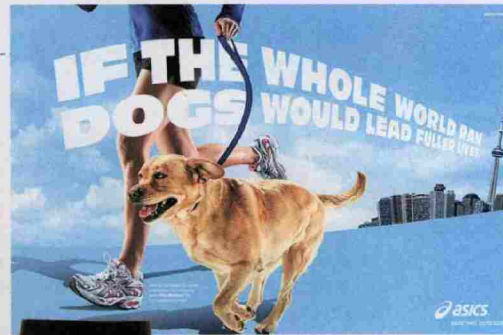
On the surface, it's the endlessly remarked-upon shift from traditional media to digital media and viral marketing in all its forms. Dig a little bit deeper, though, and you'll find something more meaningful going on—the corresponding swing of the brand-building pendulum from persuasion to the influence of trusted sources, as seen, for example, in the proliferation of social media. Again, if you seek to drive change, it's essential to grasp not only the "whats," but also the "hows" and "whys" of new media.

Advertising can't just disrupt anymore, aka the 30-second TV spot, but must integrate and infuse pop culture. How does this impact the kind of creative talent that agencies need?

Put simply, it puts a premium on outstanding talent with brilliant ideas. The best talent understands that, after some decades of media stasis, we are in a period of accelerated evolution. The best talent is nimble enough to try fresh approaches and arrive at the best mix for delivering return on marketing investment. As disruption is supplanted by engagement, brilliant ideas are needed to bring virtual and real-life brand experiences into the kind of harmony that makes for lasting, effective engagement. Finally, I think the wise agency realizes that the phrase "creative talent" encompasses left-brain, analytical thinking, too. This is especially true in today's incredibly interactive marketing world, where consumers tell us so much about their preferences, lives and actions—if we know where to look and how to listen.

Do you believe TV ad campaigns work for brands anymore?

Absolutely. For all the undeniable and growing importance of new media and



The world of MDC Partners:
 1 'Subservient Chicken' campaign for Burger King, from Crispin Porter + Bogusky.
 2 A campaign for Asics, by Vitro. 3 Colle + McVoy's brand makeover for Caribou Coffee.

novel marketing models, it's important to remember that television and even the traditional television ad format still have tremendous reach. It's equally important to think holistically—to think in terms of "and" rather than "or." For many brands, television advertising continues to make a great deal of sense as one component of a broader campaign. The challenge lies in understanding what television can accomplish for a client and what role it can play in a fully integrated strategy.

What's your favorite campaign to come out of MDC?

Ah, now you're asking a parent to choose between his children. But today, and off the top of my head, I'll say the Burger King "Subservient Chicken" campaign by Crispin Porter + Bogusky. Why do I think it worked? Because both the campaign and the client dared to be completely new in a big way. I've always loved the saying, "Go big or go home," and we never stop looking for ways to go big.