

# Advertising Age

Global World Agency of the Year Mindshare  
With Success in the Chinese Market and Content Hits Such as 'In the  
Motherhood,' Mindshare Is Tops Around the World

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NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- The very large Chinese audience that loves the show "Ugly Betty" has one company to thank for the program, and it's not a network or a production company. It's Mindshare, the massive media-buying agency whose client Unilever basically underwrites the Chinese interpretation of the American interpretation of the Colombian telenovela.



Mindshare Worldwide CEO Dominic Proctor and Chief Strategy Officer Nick Emery.

Last year 73 million viewers across China -- an 8.7% audience share -- watched characters on the show discover Unilever's Dove shower cream, Clear anti-dandruff shampoo and Lipton milk tea in the biggest branded-content deal done in China or by Unilever. The second season has gotten off to an equally strong start, and Mindshare is now hunting for more such deals to strike for Unilever and other clients such as L'Oréal's Maybelline, which are pleading for "Ugly Betty"-like creative projects.

"'Ugly Betty' is a flagship example of being innovative," said Frank Braeken, Unilever chairman-greater China. "Mindshare was very instrumental in getting us onboard with that show, and it's been a good forum for our brands. We want more 'Ugly Bettys'; that's what we expect from them going forward. As a result of that show, we've definitely seen higher

brand awareness."

That sort of deal is what Mindshare, a branded-content powerhouse, trades on. Why just put your client's brand next to content when you can create your own? It's a question agencies of all stripes are asking -- and loudly. But few actually get things done. Mindshare is actually delivering, with large-scale programs involving big brands in massive markets. It's just one of the many reasons that Mindshare is Ad Age's Global Media Agency of the Year for 2008.

The other reasons: Last year Mindshare reinvented itself with a new structure and the addition of two communication-planning visionaries to its stable management team; picked up about \$2 billion in new billings; and satisfied clients such as Unilever, Nike and L'Oréal with creative, integrated solutions the world over. And in a world where China is a challenging but increasingly important market, Mindshare emerged as a clear leader there.

### **From broadband to broadcast**

What marketers expect these days -- and Mindshare strategically and meticulously delivers -- is a full-service experience from a media agency with a cohesive team of co-creators that can take ideas from broadband to broadcast and monetize them along the way.

"Every client I've spoken to wants specialists on his business but wants them to be integrated," said Mindshare CEO Dominic Proctor. "Where there used to be eight or nine specific groups working with a client and sitting in different parts of the office, now there are three or four."

In the restructuring, Mindshare was streamlined and flattened into four units: client leadership, a consultant-like business-planning unit, a creative-thinking hub called Invention and the Exchange trading arm, where about half of Mindshare's almost 6,000 staffers work.

"We're not trying to re-create a full-service agency rooted in media," said Nick Emery, who tried to abolish titles and title inflation in last year's restructuring in favor of a simple "leader" or "director" moniker but himself admits to the role of chief strategy and planning officer. (Mr. Proctor now juggles three different business cards with these titles: CEO, partner and none). "Media agencies need to have creative skills. And it's much cheaper for media agencies to re-engineer for the new world than for creative agencies to re-engineer."

Mindshare has been able to take advantage of this by moving upstream with big clients. In its European relationship with Ford, for instance, Mindshare is now the lead agency for planning and briefs the creative agencies, Mr. Emery said. And it's also worked to strengthen the all-important Unilever relationship.

### **Pooling expertise**

"They've made significant changes in the agency in the last year, driven by what clients are looking for," said Laura Klauberg, Unilever's senior VP-global media. "We always talk about integration. It's a huge advantage for us to have a Team Unilever they created in every office. People interacting with CBS sit next to a digital expert who's sitting next to someone with knowledge of content, and they all have knowledge of our brands."

One thing really struck Ms. Klauberg: "They have a phrase when they evaluate ideas: 'Is this an idea you'd love to share?' It's kind of a nice torture test for evaluating a lot of ideas."

One big idea has been "In the Motherhood," a joint U.S. project by Unilever and Sprint that used an integration with "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" to drive women to [inthemotherhood.com](http://inthemotherhood.com), where they can tell real-life stories. Some of the stories were developed by screenwriters into a series of webisodes with viewership of 5.5 million. In 2008 it was picked up by ABC and made into a network TV series that will make its debut March 26.

When projects such as "In the Motherhood" can go from broadband to broadcast, "you need a different sort of planning glue," Mr. Emery said.

That brings us to Mindshare's restructuring, which came about in its 10th year.

### Helping hands

"We were conscious that companies go in cycles and become bureaucratic in about 10 years," Mr. Emery said. "I walked into Mindshare's New York office and saw a screen with 15 logos [of Mindshare companies]. We'd become a department store."

What gives Mindshare's new structure and its creative-thinking hub credibility is that Invention, as it's known, will be run by George Michaelides and Graham Bednash, the legendary duo who pioneered communications planning at London-based Michaelides & Bednash and inspired later start-ups such as Naked. After 12 years of changing the way agencies and clients think about communications planning from their perch at boutique-like M&B, the pair joined Mindshare in October 2008.

"What's exciting was the opportunity to do something significant globally rather than just be a fashion accessory," said Mr. Bednash. "George and myself are the global leaders of Invention, with a specific focus on Unilever."

Mindshare did stunning work for clients around the world in 2008, but it was really the year of China, because of both the country's role as a global growth engine and the Olympic Games.

Nike, for instance, saw China become its No. 2 market after the U. S., and local 2008 sales surpassed \$1 billion as the company went all out with massive integrated-marketing initiatives around

## NEW BUSINESS

### LG (GLOBAL)

\$400 MILLION

### ESTÉE LAUDER (U.S.)

\$300 MILLION

### CARPHONE WAREHOUSE (EUROPE)

\$90 MILLION

## NEW FACES

### HANNAH EVERSHERD

Global search-engine-marketing director

### GEORGE MICHAELIDES

Leader, Invention group

### GRAHAM BEDNASH

Leader, Invention group

## WORK



### CONTENT COUP

"Ugly Betty" is a hit in China, thanks to Mindshare and Unilever.

sports, players and drawing young people into what it was like to become a star athlete. Kerry Hoyt-Pack, Nike's Shanghai-based brand connections director for China, was impressed by the passion of Mindshare's Nike team, which is organized by different sports.

"They're as obsessed as we are with sports and youth," she said. "They're constantly pushing for innovation and finding ways to break through, because there's a lot of clutter in this market."

### **Olympian mascara**

Mindshare also had solutions for non-sports marketers stumped by the inescapable Olympics. Maybelline China had to launch a new waterproof mascara during the Olympics in August, with the added disadvantage of a bad rep as not being truly smudgeproof. Mindshare targeted young women during their hour-long commutes on public transport with "Mabel's Dating Diaries," a light-hearted summer romance screened on subway TVs. Every week the pretty young actress who played Mabel dated a new guy, sported a different look and endured a water-related challenge from rain, tears, sweat or swimming pool. She always emerged unsmudged, and the subway series -- also available on a minisite -- drew 8.7 million video views and 230,00 votes for Mabel's perfect date.

Mindshare won more than \$2 billion in new business, boosting revenue growth close to 10% in 2008. The biggest account wins were the global \$400 million LG business and \$300 million from Estee Lauder in the U.S. The LG review came along just weeks after Mindshare and parent WPP Group lost a pitch for another Korean global marketer, Samsung, to Publicis Groupe. But LG is less developed as a global brand, and activity on that account has been disappointingly slow. So far, LG isn't taking advantage of the long-term efforts that Mindshare excels at with clients like Unilever, where the agency is working on projects now that, Ms. Klauberg said, consumers will only see in 2010.

In China, one of the challenges in winning -- and hanging onto -- business is that big local media shops can often get better rates. Even though Mindshare is by far the biggest western media agency in China, with 800 people in the mainland and 100 in Hong Kong, the company lost Ford's media buying last year to a local company called Walk On.

At the same time, Mindshare won back Unilever's whole media account for China, including production, after splitting it with local buyer Allyes.



### **MAYBELLINE**

Mindshare launched smudgeproof mascara for Maybelline China on subway TV screens with "Mabel's Dating Diaries" as Mabel looks for love during wet weather without sacrificing perfect mascara.