

PRWeek

May 2010

AGENCY PROFILES



WCG

Principal

Jim Weiss, CEO

Ownership

Independent

Subsidiary agencies

Invigorate Communications

Offices

6 wholly owned globally; 5 in the US

Revenue

\$26,939,000; \$25,811,000 in the US

Headcount

165 globally; 134 in the US

In the eight years since its launch, WCG (WeissComm Group) has grown furiously, targeting both acquisitions and organic growth. This year, for the first time, it takes a spot among the top 10 independent PR agencies.

In 2009, the healthcare shop added creative and digital services as part of an overall strategy to diversify its offerings and address client demands.

Jim Weiss, CEO of WCG, says he realized the need to diversify after the firm suffered a rough fourth quarter in 2008 that resulted in layoffs.

“We wanted to have the diversity and ability to communicate programs through a number of different media,” he says.

Creative gamble pays off

In the first half of 2009, WCG acquired creative shop ODA and Bob Pearson’s social media firm Common Sense Media Group. The gamble paid off – WCG’s 2009 revenues in the US increased 36% over 2008.

CFO Tony Esposito attributes 16% of the firm’s total growth to those two key acquisitions. The firm is now aiming for revenue of around \$35 million in 2010.

The agency doubled staff to nearly 170 people, bringing in key leaders such as Pearson as chief technology and media officer and Burson-Marsteller’s Gail Cohen as global MD. The firm brought in 20 employees from ODA and two from Common Sense through the acquisitions.

Long-term thinking

“We’re basically looking at, from here on out, pretty slow, steady growth,” says Weiss, who says he still works with clients. “My goal is to build something that’s sustained, and [to get] people to stay for a long time and really grow with the company.”

WCG picked up significant wins, such as Medtronic. It also experienced organic growth with companies including Pfizer and Bristol-Myers Squibb. While Weiss says the firm is steadily invited to major pitches, he notes that it will still take small projects with potential clients to get its foot in the door.

“Unlike my old model, which was a lot of little accounts, we’re getting what I would say are somewhat fewer, [but] bigger assignments,” he says. “The healthcare world is changing so fast and we have to stay flexible and nimble.”

36%

The increase in WCG’s US revenue from 2008 to 2009. The agency’s staffing rose 56%, from 86 to 134, in the same period

WCG

60 Francisco Street
San Francisco, California 94133
415-362-5018
www.wcgworld.com

2010 Standings

Rank 2010	Agency Name	US Revenue (\$)		Change %	Rank 2009	Staff 2009	Staff 2008	Change %	Revenue (\$) US employee	Location
		2009	2008							
1	Edelman	\$288,504,585	\$287,469,596	0%	1	1,715	1,633	5%	\$168,224	Chicago
2	Waggener Edstrom Worldwide	\$94,599,000	\$108,591,000	-13%	2	628	704	-11%	\$150,635	Bellevue, WA
3	Ruder Finn	\$71,071,000	\$77,275,000	-8%	3	342	358	-4%	\$207,810	New York
4	APCO Worldwide	\$60,000,000	\$62,000,000	-3%	4	257	257	0%	\$233,463	Washington, DC
5	Qorvis Communications	\$37,188,804	\$34,919,065	6%	5	96	96	0%	\$387,383	Washington, DC
6	WCG	\$25,811,000	\$18,981,000	36%	11	134	86	56%	\$192,619	San Francisco
7	Schwartz Communications	\$23,085,774	\$29,334,668	-21%	6	158	181	-13%	\$146,112	Waltham, MA
8	ICR	\$22,463,008	\$26,713,971	-16%	7	91	109	-17%	\$246,846	Norwalk, CT
9	DKC	\$22,050,000	\$22,400,000	-2%	9	125	111	13%	\$176,400	New York
10	Taylor Global	\$19,100,000	\$20,305,000	-6%	10	96	106	-9%	\$198,958	New York
11	Text 100	\$17,000,000	\$23,900,000	-29%	8	85	111	-23%	\$200,000	New York
12	Gibbs & Soell	\$16,420,326	\$18,742,496	-12%	12	91	101	-10%	\$180,443	New York
13	Padilla Speer Beardsley	\$15,195,259	\$15,952,172	-5%	13	98	114	-14%	\$155,054	Minneapolis
14	Allison & Partners	\$14,662,255	\$13,082,147	12%	20	80	100	-20%	\$183,278	San Francisco
15	Peppercom	\$12,531,383	\$13,558,168	-8%	16	70	77	-9%	\$179,020	New York
16	PainePR	\$12,429,549	\$13,338,514	-7%	19	66	76	-13%	\$188,327	Irvine, CA
17	Cooney/Waters Group	\$12,344,058	\$10,459,663	18%	29	45	38	18%	\$274,312	New York
18	French/West/Vaughan	\$12,234,095	\$13,433,632	-9%	18	71	83	-14%	\$172,311	Raleigh, NC
19	Coyne Public Relations	\$12,176,000	\$11,600,000	5%	24	91	85	7%	\$133,802	Parsippany, NJ
20	PCGCampbell Marketing & Comms.	\$11,768,722	\$15,731,040	-25%	14	85	128	-34%	\$138,456	Dearborn, MI
21	RF/Binder Partners	\$11,600,000	\$12,713,964	-9%	21	70	74	-5%	\$165,714	New York
22	5W Public Relations	\$11,061,338	\$11,919,546	-7%	23	67	79	-15%	\$165,095	New York
23	Shift Communications	\$10,642,292	\$12,233,693	-13%	n/a	77	n/a	n/a	\$138,212	Brighton, MA
24	Capstrat	\$10,436,000	\$12,482,000	-16%	22	67	85	-21%	\$155,761	Raleigh, NC
25	CRT/tanaka	\$10,354,859	\$10,150,286	2%	30	60	67	-10%	\$172,581	Richmond, VA
26	Makovsky & Company	\$10,200,000	\$11,000,000	-7%	28	50	50	0%	\$204,000	New York
27	Zeno Group	\$10,052,218	\$11,202,806	-10%	27	59	62	-5%	\$170,377	Chicago
28	Hunter Public Relations	\$10,027,706	\$9,471,059	6%	35	62	59	5%	\$161,737	New York