

5 Minutes

Louise Lawton talks with Darryl McClay, managing director at Raydar.



Louise Lawton You are a recently merged agency – what's the story?

Darryl McClay Raydar Ltd is the result of my business of 15 years, Raydar Creative being acquired by The Clemenger Group and merged with one of their companies called Alphabet Soup. The merge makes sense on many levels. A bigger team and more available resources is a huge advantage to our clients. There is also greater opportunity for staff to grow and learn within a bigger company, plus

the advantages of the wider Clemenger Group network.

LL Has this changed how you view business and the type of clients you work with?

DM Having a bigger internal resource and the ability to tap into The Clemenger Group network certainly does broaden the work scope for Raydar. For me personally, one of the biggest changes from owning and running an independent agency to being part of a larger group is the immediate opportunity to tap into world class resources and to work with a larger pool of specialists across all communication disciplines. You can end up being isolated as an independent so I am really enjoying the new environment.

LL Are you specialists in a particular area?

DM This is always a hard question, as being a creative agency we do have the ability to work across most mediums. However, Raydar's core strengths and reputation are definitely in and around retail with a mix of mailbox and in-store. The majority of our business falls technically into the 'below the line' category, and we are proud of that as we know the absolute value that we bring to the communication mix for our clients. When done properly this type of communication has a huge impact on sales

and the long-term health of a brand. We focus on producing creative that is 100% on brand, has a strong call to action and when appropriate leverages other communication activity in the market place. We often find ourselves working alongside our clients' various other communication partners (local and international), and we embrace this as it benefits the client and brings out the best in each agency. We do take on a small number of projects that fall outside our main business scope – I find its good for our creative team to have some variation and often it sparks some new thinking that we can then apply to the retail-based work.

LL What is your design philosophy?

DM Not being an actual designer myself, but having worked in this industry for the last 20 years, I've learnt to recognise and appreciate great design when I see it. In our world we design to communicate, so we get the message right first and then add tone and design aesthetics to complete the communication. We are very aware that consumers are bombarded with advertising messages everywhere they go, so we work hard to make sure our communication stands out in its environment and is understood at the very first glance. This often involves a stripping back process from

a design point of view as we juggle functionality with each brand's personality to produce great-looking communication. I think that our ability to do this effectively and consistently sets us apart from many generalist communication agencies.

LL What attributes do you look for when hiring designers?

DM The obvious ones are attitude, talent and desire but combined with the ability to really understand each brand and its consumer. The most valuable designer to me is one that has the ability to think strategically as well as produce fantastic design.

LL Where to from here with Raydar?

DM I think that our niche in the market is on the rise as marketers better understand the importance of strong retail communication and the return on investment. My vision for Raydar is to continue to do what we do well and to proactively help our clients be even more effective with their marketing spend by staying on top of new technology and the ever-changing beast that is the modern consumer.

Louise Lawton is a consultant at Portfolio Recruitment, an Auckland-based recruitment agency that specialises in the advertising and design industry. See: portfoliorecruit.co.nz or contact: louise@portfoliorecruit.co.nz