

FT.com taps PN for part of \$15m push

By Craig McGuire

NEW YORK: FT.com, the Internet arm of the *Financial Times*, has tapped Porter Novelli to provide the PR component of its \$15 million integrated marketing program, scheduled to run from September to the end of the year.

With FT.com still hammering out its marketing game plan, PN doesn't know how big a slice of the \$15 million pie it will receive. PN EVP Peter Hirsch, however, said the firm will provide both on- and offline PR and media outreach.

FT.com has assembled a slew of agencies for the campaign, including lead agency BBDO New York (print and TV advertising), PN, @atmosphere (online advertising) and Direct Partners (direct marketing).

CyberAlert prexy claims deal with supplier is close

By Craig McGuire

STRATFORD, CT: Just weeks after releasing the latest flavor of its Internet monitoring service, CyberAlert is close to inking a deal with a major supplier.

While declining to name names, CyberAlert president and CEO William Comcovich said the deal will free up CyberAlert to do what it does best: focus solely on technology, leaving analysis, implementation and account management to its new partner – or perhaps its new parent.

One possible suitor could be Business Wire. Senior execs at the wire giant concede that to compete with rival PR Newswire, they'll need more Internet monitor-

ing firepower than their current alliance with Luce Online provides. PRN acquired industry leader eWatch from WAVO earlier this year (*PRWeek*, Jan. 31).

While confirming that BW is in negotiations with an Internet monitoring service, both VP of national sales Gregg Castano and VP of global media Neil Hershberg said they are unaware of any pending deal with CyberAlert.

CyberAlert's newly released version 3.0 Internet-monitoring and clipping service includes a fully integrated archiving and clip management system for PR, reputation management, market research, business planning and intellectual property surveillance. The company, which was formed to monitor online comments about an anesthesia product, has evolved into one of the most respected Internet watchdogs.

He was formerly a senior consultant with Lundy Associates.

HOUSTON: Cuantra, an information-management firm for ground transportation companies, has tapped **KCSA PR Worldwide** for its August launch in Mexico. Cuantra is planning to expand into South America by 2001.

SAN DIEGO: Stoorza, Ziegus & Metzger has picked up \$1 million in new work from seven technology clients: **ideaEDGE Ventures, 1-800-CALL-DOC, iMammogram.com, I-Flow, VenServ, Jaymark and eStore Manager.**

BEDFORD, MA: SupplyWorks, a b-to-b Internet purchasing company, has appointed **Michael Mitsock** VP of marketing. Mitsock will oversee the company's corporate and product marketing, product management and communications programs.

Merrill Lynch Asia names Ketchum

By Craig McGuire

HONG KONG: Merrill Lynch Asia Pacific has chosen Ketchum over a host of suitors to serve as its agency of record in the region.

Ketchum bested a shortlist of multinational firms, including Burson-Marsteller and Shandwick, according to Tim Cobb, director of marketing & communications for Merrill Lynch Asia Pacific.

"I have a small staff of four at our Hong Kong headquarters, and no one on the ground in the other countries," Cobb said. "So we'll look to Ketchum's regional presence for support for our business in priority markets such as China, Taiwan and Korea."

Cobb said the agency's suc-

cessful handling of Charles Schwab's Hong Kong launch was a main factor in his decision. Ketchum, though, may have had a slight advantage during the six-month evaluation process, as its minority-owned office in Japan, PRAP Japan, counts Merrill Lynch Mercury Asset Management among its clients.

Though both parties refused to disclose billings, Ketchum EVP Asia Pacific David Jensen said, "It's a significant enough amount to do the job and do it well."

Ketchum is expected to assist with media relations, especially in Greater China. The agency has offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Taipei and Hong Kong.

Ketchum's role also includes strategic counseling, issue management, employee communications and production of collateral materials.

pendency and retain its name. The firm's management team, including co-founders Rick Doyon and Mia Wedgbury, will remain in place and report to Linda Smith, SVP and GM of Fleishman/Canada.

"We recognized that in order to take our business to the next level, we needed a partner like Fleishman-Hillard," said Doyon, noting that High Road works with a number of companies that have recently gone public and want IR assistance.

Doyon said High Road expects to add eight employees within the next six months and double in size by 2002.

Fleishman/Canada, with offices in Toronto and Montreal, boasts 50 employees and clients including Sybase and Intuit. High Road, with offices in Toronto and Ottawa, has 27 employees and 35 clients, including Lucent, AOL Canada and Pitney Bowes.

Hoover taps Middleberg

By Craig McGuire

AUSTIN: Hoover's Online has named Middleberg + Associates as its agency of record, an account worth between \$300,000 and \$400,000 per year.

While declining to identify the other agencies that pitched for the business, Hoover's Online VP of marketing William Cargill said, "We spoke with the local arms of all the big agencies, as well as the mid-sized technology PR firms in the Austin area." Previously, the company worked with Ogilvy, a relationship that lasted less than a year.

"[Ogilvy's] technology group is relatively new, and we felt

their expertise was better suited to large consumer brands as opposed to business technology brands," Cargill explained. However, Kathryn Lancioni, VP in Ogilvy's hi-tech practice countered that the bulk of the 20 accounts handled by the firm's NY office are business-to-business companies.

M+A has been charged with providing PR support for a site enhancement project and positioning campaign. "We were impressed with similar work they did with *Consumers Reports* and *Encyclopaedia Britannica*," said Cargill. "We are positioning ourselves as more of a productivity tool."