

PRWeek

PR Agency of the Year 2009

Sponsored by NYU School of Continuing Professional Studies

Winner

Edelman

Edelman's continued strength in the areas of financial performance, innovation, and client relationships is what convinced this year's judges that it should receive the very highest agency honor. Over the entry period, the firm grew 19% globally to \$448 million and 16% in the US to \$288 million, "amazing growth considering their already large base of revenue," according to one judge.

Nearly all of this growth was organic, and the agency exceeded its internal forecasts in every region and practice. Part of that organic growth is due to its long-term client relationships, which include Heinz, Wyeth, Butterball, ConAgra Foods, Johnson & Johnson, Unilever, UPS, and Kraft. Even more impressive, the firm retained all of its top 50 clients, which now account for more than 50% of worldwide billings. But the agency also managed to add 279 new clients during the entry period. The largest wins included Teleflora, Pepsi, and Hewlett-Packard.

Over the past four or five years, Edelman has become well known for its innovation in the digital space. Over the past year, it



added to that reputation. In 2008, the firm launched Edelman Studios, a virtual studio designed to pair emerging talent and established storytellers with brands and companies that are looking to connect with consumers in new ways. It also created the Boomer Insights Generation Group, a virtual practice to support clients that market to baby boomers.

In addition, Edelman took steps to improve its employee retention and training. It reduced US voluntary turnover by 8%. In addition, the agency enhanced Edelman University, its in-house education program, offering 80,000 hours of instruction, a 125% increase from 2007. It also established a new

mentorship program which pairs 80 VPs and SVPs with GMs. Continuing a long-standing tradition of pro bono support, in 2008 Edelman made a \$350,000 commitment for staff to contribute time and skills to youth education around the world.

Edelman's position of thought leadership in the industry is arguably unrivaled by any other agency of any other size. CEO Richard Edelman is a highly visible figure within the sector and a member of the Arthur W. Page Society. In addition, every member of the firm's management has active membership in organizations from the World Wildlife Fund to the Prince of Wales Foundation.

As one judge put it, "Edelman continues to evolve and lead."

BUSINESS – AGENCY

The Award

This award was judged by comparing the winners of the Boutique, Small, Midsize, and Large PR Agency of the Year categories. Judges looked for evidence of financial growth, profit margins, client roster growth, client retention, client satisfaction, good HR practices, innovation, and creativity. All of these achievements were considered relative to the agency's size and previous standing.

Finalists 2009

- Coyne Public Relations
- Dig Communications
- Edelman
- LaunchSquad

