



Haggar Clothing Makes Crispin Porter an Equity Partner

Miami Shop Gets Minority Stake; CEO Hails Agency-Client 'Convergence Model'

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Published: April 21, 2006

NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- The Haggar Clothing Co., a department-store pants supplier bent on becoming a lifestyle brand, has hired Crispin Porter & Bogusky, Miami, in what it describes as an "unconventional partnership" that includes Crispin taking a minority equity position in the newly private Haggar.



Crispin CEO Jeff Hicks described the relationship as an 'agency-client convergence model' that 'eliminates the noise which can exist between clients and agencies.'

Leadership shakeup

The move was led by Haggar Chief Marketing Officer Stephen Croncota, who recently joined the Dallas-based clothing company following a stint as head of worldwide marketing for Versace in Milan. His hiring was part of a leadership shakeup that's taken place since last November when Jim Lewis was named president-CEO of the company in a surprise move.

In a press release, Mr. Croncota and Mr. Lewis praised Crispin's work on the Burger King and Volkswagen brands, acknowledging that Haggar needs a similar revitalization as a "vibrant lifestyle brand which offers a complete collection for head-to-toe dressing," according to Mr. Croncota.

Broad agency duties

The release said Crispin will be handling "aspects of product development, new business

development, marketing, experience design, digital marketing, viral marketing, and more."

Crispin CEO Jeff Hicks described the relationship as an "agency-client convergence model" that "eliminates the noise which can exist between clients and agencies."

"As an agency, our model is not really one that works well with one-off projects," he said. "Our best results have come when we have empowered products to market themselves beyond paid media."

Beyond creating ads

Developing these kinds of wide-ranging relationships is often a hot topic among agency executives, who talk of wanting to develop broader ties to clients based on a greater range of marketing and business capabilities -- not just their ability to make ads.

Haggar is probably best-known as a supplier of slacks -- a term it claims to have coined -- to department and mid-tier stores. Mr. Lewis has said it's his plan to refocus on suit separates and jackets and develop a sportswear line.

Haggar was delisted from Nasdaq after an investor group, led by a pair of private-equity firms, bought the company from shareholders for \$212 million. The sale was finalized on Nov. 1, the same day three top executives, including J.M. (Joe) Haggar IV, were forced out and Mr. Lewis was installed.