

PR AGENCY REPORT CARD

2011

 **The Holmes Report**
News and Intelligence for Public Relations Professionals

KAPLOW

Lifestyle-focused brand-building PR

NEW YORK

TWENTY years ago, the best public relations firms understood the media and their core competency was delivering great publicity for their clients and their products or services. Ten years ago, the best public relations firms understood brands, and their core competency was delivering campaigns that built or protected brands. Today, the best public relations firms understand the consumer, and their core competencies include delivering genuine insights into the consumer mindset, and then creating campaigns that work through a variety of channels—traditional and digital—to make an emotional connection and ultimately drive changes in consumer behavior. Kaplow is one such firm.

Whether it's working with **Timex** to re-invent the company's brand to appeal to taste-makers and style mavens or bringing iconic luggage brand **Tumi** to a hip, fashion-conscious audience by working with well-known graffiti artist Crash, Kaplow seeks

to create and change the conversations consumers are having about brands. In the consumer technology arena, meanwhile, it helped to reposition **Skype**, once seen as a "desktop client" for techies, as a technology that helps consumers and business people connect with one other locally and globally.

"In a world full of big promises, Kaplow brings big results," says Carlotta Jacobson, president of longtime client Cosmetic Executive Women. "Day in and day out, they deliver what they say they will. It's that simple."

That kind of creativity helped Kaplow overcome a disappointing start to the year, with the departure of flagship client eBay, which had accounted for an alarming proportion of its revenues during the previous year. A major new business push brought in a host of clients, including blue-chip brands such

as **AOL**, the **Avon Foundation for Women**, **baby phat**, **thefind**, **Foursquare**, **Oshkosh B'gosh**, and **Tumi**. Coupled with the firm's continued work for longstanding clients such as **Alberto Culver**, **CVS/pharmacy**, **Skype** and **Target**, those wins meant that all of the lost eBay revenue was replaced by the end of the year, and Kaplow ended the year with fee income of around \$9.4 million, ranking just outside the top 30 independents.

One key to the firm's success was a 360° approach to client campaigns that supplements the firm's core media relations capabilities with newer offerings that include its Kdrive social media practice, its Kstudio content creation and distribution unit, and groups focused on special events, corporate social responsibility and brand storytelling. Projects like Kstudio's work for **Target**, **AOL** and **Coupons.com** and Kdrive's support for **Mark and St. Ives** helped Kaplow earn our Creative Agency of the Year award for its work in 2010.

The firm enters its 20th year in 2011 on a new business roll, and with a revamped senior management team. Founder, president and CEO **Liz Kaplow** continues to lead the firm, along with CFO **Evan Jacobs**, supported by executive vice president and e-commerce practice leader **Leah Schmerl**, senior vice president of emerging media and technology (and Kdrive director) **Chaim Haas**; **Nissa Anklesaria**, head of Kaplow West; and senior VP and beauty, health and wellness practice leader **Margarita Miranda-Abate**. A significant investment in cultural initiatives—the Kaplow U professional development program and a strong commitment to community outreach through a partnership with Project Morry—also secured the firm a place on our list of the Best Agencies to Work For.