

## Agency Business Report

# A year of ups and downs

Outside the large, well-known agencies lie dozens with their own stories to tell.

By Craig McGuire

Every year, as agency rankings are compiled, several firms emerge with surprising gains – or losses.

While a small agency with revenues in the low six figures only needs to win one or two accounts to see a significant percentage gain, PRWeek has interviewed a few firms that have grown this year over and above their own expectations, and market conditions. While many of the successful agencies operate in the health-care area, public affairs also proved to be a robust source of business.

But for some agencies, the market proved far tougher, and, perhaps not surprisingly, the largest decline this year was seen among the tech specialists. To their credit, the agency heads interviewed did not attribute their revenue slides solely to the downturn in the tech sector. Undoubtedly, though, the incidental client losses that drove their revenues downward were more difficult to recover from in a sector that has only recently shown signs of renewed growth.

### **Brand Resources Group UP 314%**

While hardly the largest consumer marketing agency in the US, Atlanta-based Brand Resources Group was unrivaled in the rankings, reporting 2003 revenue growth of 314% - to \$2.3 million from \$550,000 the year before. CEO Jane Barwis attributes the growth of the relatively young shop (launched in November 2001) to incremental business wins from existing clients.

“We went from owning projects to becoming the lead or only agency with all of our clients,” Barwis explains. “We also expanded relationships into additional business divisions within client organizations based on internal referrals.”