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## MARKETING DAILY TOP STORY

### GroupM merges search groups

**GroupM** has put together one heck of a search party. In what it describes as a "significant reorganization" of its search marketing operations, the parent company of **WPP Group's** media operations announced Friday that it is consolidating and restructuring its global search operations.

The move brings together four search entities that previously operated independently: the organic search provider **Outrider**; organic and paid search specialist **Catalyst**; the search unit of **24/7 Real Media**, and the paid search agency **Quisma**. The global search unit will total roughly 400 people.

According to GroupM, the move will create the world's largest search specialist inside a holding company, and will have a "greater geographic footprint" than any competitor.

The goal, says GroupM, is to more closely integrate search with the overall communications planning of its media networks (MediaCom, Mediaedge:cia, MindShare and Maxus), while delivering "best in class" search engine marketing, search engine optimization, and advanced search capabilities.

Each of the GroupM networks will boast a fully integrated search unit—MediaCom Search, Mediaedge:cia Search, MindShare Search and Maxus Search—while Outrider will serve as a neutral search operation for non-GroupM clients.

As part of the realignment, the search groups will all gain access to Decide DNA, 24/7 Real Media's proprietary bid management platform. In Canada, the search division of 24/7 Real Media (purchased by WPP last May) will be extracted and housed in separate offices.

"The objective is to bring the best practices in search marketing worldwide to the GroupM agency clients in Canada," says GroupM Canada president and CEO **David Campbell**.

"What it means is that each [GroupM] agency will operate a search service that's fully integrated with all the other agencies' search services. They're all going to benefit from the technology investments, the training programs and the back-office functions of GroupM," he adds.

Search is the largest and fastest growing segment of online marketing. In Canada, GroupM estimates it comprises roughly 40% of all online marketing activity. It accounted for US\$8.6 billion in global spending in 2007 according to eMarketer, which projects that figure to reach US\$16.6 billion by 2011. "It's growing very quickly," says Campbell. "[The move] is all about future practices."

—Chris Powell

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