

The Bluedog Group acquires Essential Communications



The Bluedog Group and Essential Communications

[The Bluedog Group](#) has added PR specialism to its travel retail marketing services lineup with the acquisition of PR agency [Essential Communications](#).

According to the company, "The deal builds on the group's successful 2021 reshaping that saw the launch of Kounter, doplr and HEX as agencies under the group banner to focus respectively on international retail campaigns and activations, live experiences and digital, design, and content solutions. Since then, the business has grown exponentially and counts clients that include Dufry, Bacardi, Pernod Ricard, Ritter Sport, Lindt & Wella as long-term partners."

Essential Communications was founded in 1994 as the first specialist travel retail agency by Rowena Holland, after a career in travel retail journalism. Nestlé International Travel Retail was a founding client and remains on the roster 29 years later, alongside others such as Accolade Wines, Imperial Brands, Champagne Lanson, Mars Wrigley ITR, Molton Brown, and William Grant & Sons.

"Shared clients, a shared 'extra mile ethos', and shared ambitions to give clients creativity fueled by common sense and layers of channels working smartly alongside each other is at the core of this new acquisition," says Bluedog Group CEO Nick King. "We are seeing clients asking us not just about the where, what, and why of a campaign or activation, but increasingly about how we get the fame factor and engagement flowing through media and wider communications channels too."

“There is a pinch point we are being asked to advise on, a desire for clarity and alignment in tough times, and I’m proud to say that trust in our Group is helping to answer those questions. In Rowena and her team, we have a kindred spirit, and across the group we now have a complimentary set of experts to bounce off each other, and the deepest set of industry knowledge and experience you could wish for in one place. This means we can answer client questions with real rounded value and rigor.”

Holland, who will continue in her role as Managing Director for Essential Communications as the business runs with autonomy alongside Bluedog’s other agencies, adds, “With nearly 30 years under our belt, we’ve seen massive changes in industry needs, challenges, and opportunities, not least the move towards 360-degree service providers that can land a proper campaign differential. We saw a gap in the market when we launched our agencies, and in collectively listening and responding to our clients, we are now seeing and answering another one.”

As King concludes, “It’s never the time to stand still as an agency, as fresh challenges, tough economic considerations and changing audience needs are a constant. Expect to see more from us moving forward in terms of fresh partnerships and acquisitions that can tackle these and help clients succeed in new ways.”

The enhanced Bluedog Group model is live now, with the acquisition of Essential Communications completed on April 28, 2023.