



SANTA ANA'S AMUSEMENT PARK: SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA'S MOST TRUSTED ADVERTISING AGENCY

▶▶ ONE IN A SUNDAY SERIES

BY CATHI DOUGLAS



Santa Ana's world-renowned advertising icon Michael Weisman loves the idea that adults can walk through his doors and become kids again – believing that anything is possible and having an

undiluted good time. That's one reason why he and his partners at DGWB – downtown Santa Ana's acclaimed advertising agency – chose to invest in and rebrand this spring as Amusement Park.

DGWB co-owners Weisman and Jon Gothold – partnering with Jimmy Smith, founder and chief executive of Los Angeles-based Amusement Park Entertainment, and Ed Collins, a one-time DGWB chief marketing officer – want to create something unique with Amusement Park.

Amusement Park offers clients an out-of-the-box toolkit to send their messages to key audiences with its unique "entertainment view of the world," explained Bob Ochner, the agency's public relations director. "There are different ways to communicate with people – games, comics, made-for-TV events – all with different components. We are trying to build a bridge to the consumer in engaging ways."



new partnership and new name is The Values Institute, a strategic think tank that conducts research and consults businesses in identifying and implementing shared values. "We have found like-minded partners who understand the values expectations for our company and clients," Weisman noted. "It is the focal point of messaging for all our clients, and in our new venture we have found that it is a really nice marriage between our two entities."



■ (top) Santa Ana's Amusement Park opened with the fanfare of a carnival atmosphere; A whimsical mural greets visitors to the new Santa Ana office; One wall is hardly enough space to house the raft of awards and honors racked up by the agency; Santa Ana's Amusement Park sampling of the agency's clients.
 ■ (middle) Santa Ana's Amusement Park's leadership team; Mike Weisman, Jon Gothold, Jimmy Smith and Ed Collins.
 ■ (bottom) Santa Ana's City Hall Building circa 1935, renovated to Amusement Park's Santa Ana Headquarters.

SANTA ANA: DID YOU KNOW? Santa Ana's DGWB was rebranded as Amusement Park, and relocated from Irvine to Downtown Santa Ana to create a world-class advertising firm.

The rebranded agency is "not just bolting a traditional ad agency onto an entertainment company," Weisman recently told the Orange County Business Journal. "It's these two entities coming together to form something completely different, which is this media-agnostic communications organization that can create social currency for clients beyond giving them sales, which is obviously the lifeblood of any business."

Founded in 1998, DGWB has 90 staff members in offices in L.A. and Santa Ana and serves clients like the Hilton Garden Inn, Wienerschnitzel, Toshiba and Yogurtland. "We're not looking to do the historical model of advertising," Weisman said. "The world has changed. Expectations are different. Advertising needs to be entertaining to consumers." One thing that will not change with the

This new chapter continues DGWB's long history of innovation and change. The ad agency's headquarters in the strikingly beautiful, circa-1935 Santa Ana City Hall building have been home base and the springboard for not only the agency's award-winning ads, but also its important involvement in building the downtown's burgeoning creative class.

When seeking new office space after their lease in an Irvine office park expired, the agency's partners discovered that Santa Ana is a real city, with a real history and a real soul, Weisman recalled. "We loved that our creative services company would be in that environment, and we fell in love with the city." Joining the downtown arts movement and becoming Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce members, the agency and its staff remain involved in the community, offering pro bono and volunteer

services to Taller San Jose, Downtown Inc. and Working Wardrobes of Orange County.

"For me, there is nothing like Santa Ana in all of Southern California," Weisman noted. "There were a lot of dreamers here 25 years ago and here the downtown creative art services community is serving as a hallmark of the city. It looks like the United Nations, drawing a melting pot of diverse young millennials." ■

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