

Different, Yet Similar

**WEB MARKETING FIRM IMAGINET—NOW DIGITAL@JWT—
HAS FOUND NEW GROWTH IN BEING ACQUIRED.**

A few years ago, Minneapolis-based Imagnet was one of the top Web-based marketing firms in the Twin Cities. It still is—though, in some key respects, it's a very different company.

Start with its name. Imagnet is in the process of renaming itself Digital@jwt—it's already known by that name in most of the country. The name reflects another change: ownership. Founded in 1991 by current Digital@jwt President Scott Litman, the company started as a digital printing

provider before moving into Web services. Litman sold the company once, but bought it back in 1997 with partners Dan Mallin and Skip Gage. Imagnet was sold again in 2001, this time to British communications conglomerate WPP Group, which folded Imagnet into the digital division of Chicago-based ad agency J. Walter Thompson.

"We wanted to go to a national stage," Litman says of the buyout.

Since then, Digital@jwt has maintained its individuality and become a stronger local presence.

Thompson moved Digital@jwt's headquarters to Minneapolis, and put Litman and Mallin in charge of the company's 250 employees in 15 offices throughout North America. While much of Digital@jwt's work comes through J. Walter Thompson, it also gets clients on its own.

Some things haven't changed. The company still specializes in Web-based branding, marketing strategy, and development, but on a greater scale than most such firms: Its client list includes such heavy hitters as Ford, Qwest, and Nasdaq, along with local giants ADC and Dain Rauscher. Both *Advertising Age* and *AdWeek* ranked the company among the top 20 interactive agencies in 2002. With more than 90 clients worldwide, Digital@jwt generated more than \$55 million in 2002 revenue, up from \$39 million in 2001.

Mallin says that the company has kept its head above water during uncertain economic times by using existing resources wisely. "For

some things we've recently gotten into—database marketing, direct marketing, eCRM [electronic customer-relations management involving the analysis of e-commerce trends and patterns]—we can use data and expertise that we've accumulated over the years," he says.

Digital@jwt points to the Marine Corps site (www.marines.com) as a prime example of its approach. Instead of assaulting the visitor with a generic recruiting pitch, the site uses a pull-down menu that lets the visitor tailor the content to his or her needs—student, parent, academic advisor.

"We use data to target information and to improve dialogue with the prospective customer," says Mallin. His company's sites are all "opt-in"—in other words, casual visitors won't receive unwanted e-mail just by stopping by. That, in turn, means more clients are opting into Digital@jwt's services. ■

—Dan Heilman