

MDC Looks to Cash in on Artificial Intelligence With New Agency

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The MDC Innovation Center in Manhattan Credit: Courtesy MDC Partners

All eyes are on artificial intelligence right now, and MDC Media Partners is seizing the moment with the launch of Born, an AI-focused agency.

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The shop, founded by Michael Nicholas, entrepreneur-in-residence and chief experience officer at MDC Media Partners, "is the first agency of its type," said Martin Cass, CEO of MDC Media Partners. "There are lots of people who can write the copy and some who can do the technical stuff, but nobody who is bringing the two together," he added.

Mr. Nicholas will retain his role within MDC Media Partners while overseeing Born, along with Max Fresen, the new agency's chief creative officer. Mr. Fresen joined Born from DigitasLBI, where he served as senior-VP, creative of experience design. Mr. Nicholas and Mr. Fresen are based in Boston.

Born, which operates within MDC Media Partners under its own P&L, is already working with a "couple of Fortune 500" companies, but Mr. Cass declined to disclose further information on the clients.

Mr. Cass said Born "is not an agency with graphics and visuals," but is rather about "conversations at scale" in a more human way. For example, he said Apple's Siri "is droid-like," but by bringing together creativity and tech, those types of interactions can be more emotional and encapsulate a brand's personality.

As Born grows and demand increases from clients, the shop will look to bring on more staffers, but Mr. Nicholas will continue managing the agency, said Mr. Cass, who said brands have already shown great interest.

According to market intelligence firm Tractica, annual worldwide revenue for AI will grow from \$643.7 million this year to \$36.8 billion by 2025.