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Why Sweden Is Teeming With Ad Talent

Credit Good Schools and Long Winters

Posted by Stefan Engeseth on [09.22.09](#) @ 03:22 PM



Stefan Engeseth

Agencies around the globe are waging a war to attract the most talented people. And many of these talented creative people hail from Scandinavia. But why is that? I argue that it is partly because of the school system and the dark winters.

Before, traditional advertising agencies were spoiled as talented people came to them. But today the communication business is now on a bigger stage. A war of talent is going on between a number of different disciplines such as internet agencies, PR, events and in-house agencies.

Without talented employees there will be less creative work, no ad prizes, and no new exciting clients, among other things. In other words, there will be downsizing -- but the company that knows how to attract the most talented people will avoid that fate by winning clients

Long before this war began, Sweden was ready. Swedes, since kindergarten, are taught to think out the (ubiquitous Ikea) box. The long, dark winters inspire us to be creative because you get more time to think about what to do with those boxes. The results of all that darkness can be seen in brands such as Nokia, Hennes & Mauritz, Lego and Absolut vodka, which have contributed to global design and built up a demand for the Scandinavian look and feel in advertising.

Old agencies don't want to look like old agencies any more, so they try to make their websites look more 2.0, more social. Why? Because they cannot attract young, talented people who feel that old agencies have missed the social point that the internet offers.

In medieval times, Florence attracted the most talented creative people in the world. Why? Because the Medici family offered them resources to showcase their talent to the world. Today's resource is media. The internet offers free media, which is why today's internet agencies, such as the Swedien's [Farfar](#), can attract talented people to create outstanding work for clients like Diesel and Björn Borg. Farfar understands that talent is a key to success, so they started their own [academy](#).

I think this is the way to go for a lot of communication agencies: attract talent and help it grow (which also happens to be a good way to make business grow).

Sweden has good communication schools such as [Hyper Island](#), which educates students to

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work in digital communication. However, what they are basically doing is teaching them how to function in a group. That is one of the factors behind Swedish success: team dynamics that work. At Cannes Lions 2009, students from the [Bergths School of Communication](#) in Sweden won gold in the student category Future Lions. That's why students from Bergths go directly to well-known agencies such as Droga 5 in New York.

Swedish students are head-hunted for export long before they finish school. Often they are offered better salaries than their teachers.

One way to attract talented students is to offer work practice and hold guest lectures at these schools. Talent will be exported from Sweden -- and clients will be imported to Swedish agencies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stefan Engeseth is the author of "The Fall of PR and the Rise of Advertising." Read more of this thoughts at [DetectiveMarketing.com](#).

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By MATT | NEW YORK, NY [September 22, 2009 04:42:50 pm](#):

It's a shame that agencies elsewhere don't put the resources behind education that Swedish shop do.

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By FFcommunicator | charlotte, NC [September 22, 2009 07:17:50 pm](#):

Talented graduates from Sweden or elsewhere wouldn't touch a 2.0-skinned traditional agency with a 10.0-foot pole. They've studied the industry's past, heard from the guest lecturers and have been exposed to its nonsense via internships. Savvy graduates will start their own firms. We did. <http://tinyurl.com/mh22xk>

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