Agencies agree, a revolution is happening

Consulting firms across the Asia-Pacific say there is a new way forward in communications, and it isn't public relations or advertising as we know it.

BANGKOK, Thailand: At the 47th Annual Global Summit of PROI Worldwide, more than 60 of the world's leading PR agency owners have a heated discussion over the fate of communications. While many of the pundits have opposing views of Brexit, the Trump Presidency, and the apparent upending of the world order, there is consensus that there is a new normal in the way messages are sent and received, dramatically changing how our views of the world are formed.

This time however, the revolution "is televised," or at least shared in social media. "Yes, the digital revolution has redefined how we form our opinions of the world in a fundamental way," says Richard Tsang, PROI Worldwide Chairman. "And these new patterns of communication lead us to life-changing decisions; from what sort of car or house we buy, to whom we elect as our leaders."

Not just PR and advertising anymore

For brands, the question of how to communicate is not as simple as it once was. According to Mr. Tsang, "Ten years ago we still asked, PR or advertising? Nowadays, we ask a bewildering array of questions: owned, earned, or paid media? Content marketing, native advertising or influencer relations? What do we do about social media trolls and fake news?"

In a world where people are inundated with thousands of messages on a daily basis, finding a path in the forest underbrush is essential for success. And brands, more often than not, suffer through topics as puzzling as millennials and social media, and as daunting as big data and analytics.

This explosion of options has gotten businessmen and politicians in a bind, and made the consultants that provide clear advice on the way forward, all the more necessary. PROI Worldwide, an organization of independent consulting firms focusing on communications, has seen its ranks grow twofold in the last ten years. While PROI stands for Public Relations Organization International, the breadth of services offered by its members has grown much larger its name suggests.

The explosion of communication has blurred the lines between public relations and advertising, and PROI Worldwide is capitalizing on this sea change. With over $800 million in revenue spread across 75 partners in 50 countries, the industry consortium is among the three largest public relations organizations in the world. "From less than a dozen agencies four decades back, PROI now serves over 5,000 corporations with more than 5,000 employees globally," says Allard van Veen, PROI Worldwide Managing Director.

Asia Pacific growth

Nowhere is this growth more apparent than in Asia and Australia, where PROI has expanded its partnership by more than 30 percent in the last year alone. "Just in the last 12 months, we have added six new agencies to our roster, bringing our network to 17 organizations, from 11 last year," said Mr. van Veen.

But PROI's growth only mirrors the strategic importance of the region. With more than 4.4 billion people, and an aggregate GDP of over $24 trillion, Asia Pac is the world's largest economic powerhouse. The region is also expected to achieve the fastest economic growth rates in a world that has vacillated between expansion and contraction in the last five years.

"Since I founded Midas PR Group ten years ago I have witnessed a steady growth in the Asia Pacific region and Thailand in particular has been moving forward very quickly, especially when it comes to adopting any form of digital communication. This kind of rapid development makes it extremely important to have consultants that can lead the way and help companies effectively use the new technologies that are now at our disposal," explains Karin Lohitnavy, founder of Midas PR Group, PROI's first ever partner agency in Thailand.

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For further information and images please contact:
Ruksina Supatnuntakul
Midas Communications International Co, Ltd.
E-mail: ruksina@midas-pr.com
Phone: +66 80 304 8870
Website: www.midas-pr.com

About Midas PR Group

Founded in Bangkok in 2007, Midas PR Group has built a strong reputation for excellence in the local business landscape. The agency's main areas of expertise include integrated public relations, digital PR, media planning, social media marketing, website creation and design and event management. Over the years, Midas PR Group has worked with both local and international clients from a broad range of industries including technology, hospitality, fashion, online retail, finance and consumer goods. Midas' diverse and multilingual team consists of eight nationalities, twelve languages are spoken and the team comes from a wide range of professional backgrounds. The Agency's diversity helps Midas reach very specific target markets and is the main reason for the agency's success in the demanding world of PR and communications.

About PROI Worldwide

PROI Worldwide, the world's largest partnership of integrated independent communications agencies, was founded in Europe in1970 and has offices in more than 110 cities in 50+ countries. With 75 agencies across five continents, PROI Worldwide is the 6th largest communications partnership in the world with more than 5,000 staff servicing 6,300+ clients worldwide and 2015 net fee income of US$ 702+ million.