

ADVERTISING STAR



## The Martin Agency: A Virginia Legacy

[By Heather Jung]

Based in Richmond, Virginia, The Martin Agency was founded in 1965 by David N. Martin. And with such notable campaigns as “Virginia is for lovers” and the GEICO Cavemen, it is no wonder that the agency was recently ranked the number five advertising agency in the United States by *Advertising Age*.

While the agency is headquartered in Virginia, it also has an office in New York. In 1993, it became part of the Interpublic Group of Companies but retains its independent operation within the group. The agency generates an estimated \$64 million in revenue. It frequently works with students from the Virginia Commonwealth University Adcenter, which is one of the most well-known and respected advertising schools in the country.

According to the agency’s site, it is dedicated to creating “ideas for clients who believe in the power of inventive thinking. They will be ideas that consumers talk about, clients prosper from, and the people who work here are proud of.” It is this strategy that keeps the agency at the forefront of today’s advertising world.

The agency has helped create a number of recognizable and well-known campaigns. It helped coin the phrase “Virginia is for Lovers” for the state’s tourism campaign in 1969, back when the agency was still known as Martin and Woltz, Inc. The campaign helped generate \$800 million in tourism the first year it ran.

Since then, Virginia’s tourism revenue has risen to more than \$14 billion, and The Martin Agency has amassed quite an impressive client list including ALLTEL, BFGoodrich, Discover Card, GEICO, NASCAR, Sirius, UPS, and Wal-Mart.

More recently, the agency has helped make GEICO a household name, thanks to its humorous television ads featuring a gecko espousing the benefits of GEICO with a British accent, and the indignant cavemen upset over the slogan “So easy a caveman can do it.” The latter campaign, which was created by the agency’s Joe Lawson, has been so successful and well-received that it has spawned its own television show that will air on ABC.

With such bold and memorable campaigns, it is no great surprise that the agency has been given a number of awards and earned much recognition over the years. Besides being recognized as the number five advertising agency in the country, it has also received the following awards and recognition:

- Third-most creative agency in the world (*Advertising Age’s Creativity magazine*)

- Most-honored agency (Advertising Club of New York)
- The best outdoor advertising in the world (Outdoor Advertising Association of America)
- Five-time Agency of the Year (Adweek Southeast)
- International Diamond ECHO Award (Direct Marketing Association Awards)

And these are just a few of the nods the company has received. With praises like that, it is no wonder The Martin Agency has helped make its clients household names.

### ON THE NET

The Martin Agency  
[www.martinagency.com](http://www.martinagency.com)

Virginia is for Lovers (the Virginia tourism site)  
[www.virginia.org](http://www.virginia.org)

GEICO  
[www.geico.com](http://www.geico.com)

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