

ADVERTISING STAR



Dave Syferd & Partners' Kevin Nolan and Vandy Kindred

[By Robin Salisian]

Initially, both Kevin Nolan and Vandy Kindred didn't aspire to work in advertising. But something drew them in, and it wasn't necessarily the work. For Nolan, it was the "laid back atmosphere and cool, creative vibe that flowed throughout [his brother's advertising agency]." And for Kindred?

"I was planning to major in engineering, but after hearing that there were more girls in the advertising classes than in my engineering classes, I decided to explore a future in advertising." It worked. "More than 20 years later," adds the 50-year-old, "I am still working in advertising and am constantly challenged and captivated by the industry."

"My fascination in the industry grew as I learned more about the business over the years," says Nolan, 49, who received his B.A. in Advertising Design in 1981 from the Art Center College of Design. "I found myself drawn to the opportunity advertisers have to reach people on a very personal level. Approximately 29 years after I took my first job at Chiat / Day, I'm still hooked."

Kindred, a 1980 journalism graduate of Fresno State, and Nolan have history together: 12 years ago, the two (along with friend Dan Callahan) worked for ad agency Elgin Syferd/DDB Needham on the West One Bank Account. "The agency was at risk of losing the client," says Kindred, "and as a result we were — laid off."

Nolan continues, "[So] [a]fter spending a few days playing golf and contemplating our next steps, we decided to start our own small agency, Kindred Nolan Callahan (later named Dave Syferd & Partners)." And in no time, the three had landed their first client: West One Bank.

"We learned later that week that West One Bank was purchased by US Bank and that

Elgin Syferd/DDB Needham [had] lost the account. Realizing that West One Bank would need an interim agency, we called Scott Tunnel, senior vice president of marketing and proposed that we represent them, as their dissatisfaction had been with other

Q. What do you do for fun?

A. Nolan: I am an avid skier, watch the Boston Red Socks, and play drums in my band, the Two Twenty Two's. **Kindred:** I write, listen to music, work out, read, travel, and watch European soccer.

Q. Throughout your lifetime, what movie have you watched the most?

A. Nolan: *Laurence of Arabia*. **Kindred:** *Wizard of Oz*

Q. What was the last book you read?

A. Nolan: *Water for Elephants* by Sara Gruen. **Kindred:** *Team of Rivals* by Doris Kearns Goodwin.

Q. What music is on your iPod / in your CD player right now?

A. Nolan: I have all kinds of music on my iPod including Plus 44, AFI, Beethoven, The Shins, Pearl Jam, Carbon Leaf, George Winston, Dave Matthews Band, Foo Fighters, etc. **Kindred:** I've been listening to Bad Religion, Arcade Fire, Frank Sinatra, The Waterboys, and The Scorpions.

Q. If you had an extra hour in the day, what would you spend it doing?

A. Nolan: I would spend an extra hour catching up with friends. **Kindred:** I would spend it writing — not for work, but for my book, *Best Road Trip Ever*.

aspects of the agency and not with our work."

How ironic. And Nolan agrees. "We started our agency with the account we were laid off over, and we've never looked back."



Today, having gone through several name changes, Dave Syferd & Partners, located in Seattle, WA, marches on stronger now than ever before. The agency's mission? "To produce wildly successful marketing programs for our clients while creating a work environment that will attract and retain the very best people in the business."

Both Nolan and Kindred reside as partners and co-creative directors. Kindred, however, is also the agency's "writing guru," who "oversee[s] the creative product, along with [Nolan]."

"We ensure everything we produce meets the marketing goals of our clients which, in turn, coincidentally, happens to win a lot of awards."

And how true that is.

According to a small bio, "Between the two of them, Kevin and Vandy have won dozens of awards for their outstanding work, including

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the Addys, the Cannes Film Festival, the London International Show, the Clios, the New York Art Directors Club, the Seattle Show, the Pinnacles, Creativity Magazine, and the Tellys.”

Apart, Nolan worked on a Ghostbusters marketing campaign and logo in 1985, while Kindred wrote a series of weekly ads for Haggen Top Foods, winning numerous awards. Together, however, the two have worked with clients including the Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence, West One Bank, the University of Washington Athletics, and Banner Bank.

Of the Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Nolan says, “In 1995, the [CADV](#) came to us looking for a communication strategy targeting young men ages 13-21. The idea was to make it socially ‘not cool’ to abuse women and to change attitudes and behavior models pertaining to domestic violence.”

“Our solution was to integrate role models for young men as spokespersons,” he continues. “The challenge was to find the right person or individuals that would be relevant to males 13-21. We came up with a concept that would involve professional male athletes that wouldn’t *preach* to our target; rather, they would talk about how in their lives there was no room for physical or domestic violence.”

They recruited Seattle Mariner second baseman Joey Cora and pitcher Jeff Fasaro, created a campaign titled, “Refuse to Abuse,” and watched as their ad became “a highly touted national campaign.” It was even singled out as one of the “best and most effective campaigns regarding domestic violence” by National Collation against Domestic Violence advocate Jackson Katz. Nolan admits, “[It’s] one advertising campaign I am most proud of.”

And Kindred prides himself on their University of Washington Athletics campaign, which not only met marketing goals and boosted ticket sales, but also won numerous awards. “The ads played off the personalities of the basketball and football coaches and as a result were very funny and well received by the public,” adds Kindred.

With awards lining their shelves, Nolan and Kindred appear unstoppable. Fearless of the advent of TiVo, (“Advertisers will have to become smarter in how they reach people and create ads that are more exciting,” states Nolan simply), the two advertising gurus emanate confidence, enough to praise the tactics of others.

For Nolan, “Bud Light uses some of the best advertising tactics I’ve seen. They use parody to sell their product, selling through the heart instead of the head. This causes the audience to make a connection with the brand, and as a result, [people] will

remember that they like Bud Light when they shop at the grocery store.”

And Kindred offers accolades to “non-traditional and interactive [advertising tactics] such as a campaign that involves the audience and gets people to visit a website or submit a video.” Their exuberance towards the advertising field is palpable. And fortunately for advertising newbies, Nolan and Kindred aren’t shy with sharing it.

“My advice would be to go for it,” says Kindred. “It is a difficult industry to get into, so be patient and persistent.”

Nolan adds, “I would say that there is no one way to market anything. If you like cookie-cutter solutions, then this is the wrong industry for you.”

ON THE NET

Dave Syferd & Partners
www.dsandp.com/Intro.html

Washington Coalition Against Domestic Violence
www.wscadv.org

Art Center College
www.artcenter.edu

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