

WPP Announces Joint Venture with Uniworld 16 June 2000

WPP Group plc ('WPP') has announced a strategic alliance and an investment representing a 49% stake in UniWorld Group, Inc., the leading African-American and multi-cultural marketing communications firm.

Headquartered in the US, with offices in New York and Los Angeles, UniWorld serves such major Fortune 500 clients as AT&T Corporation, Colgate-Palmolive Company, Burger King Corporation, Ford Division and Lincoln-Mercury Division of Ford Motor Company, Microsoft Corporation, and others.

Founded in 1969 by former social worker, journalist and events promoter Byron Lewis, who is Chairman and CEO, UniWorld is a pioneer in marketing to ethnic consumers. It was the first agency to provide multi-cultural and multi-functional communications services, including advertising, media planning, event marketing, public relations and entertainment. While it is best known for its insights into African-American culture, aspirations and breakthrough creative product, UniWorld's assignment roster includes mainstream advertising accounts.

UniWorld has grown to become the largest ethnic agency in terms of reported US billings, which were \$230 million in 1999; it has more than 150 employees and several specialized divisions, including UniWorld Hispanic and Urban Force, a wholly-owned urban youth marketing subsidiary. UniWorld was named "Agency of the Year" in the current issue of Black Enterprise Magazine.

Commenting on the alliance with WPP, founder, Byron Lewis said, 'We waited for years to enter into a relationship like this -- until we were absolutely convinced that the partnership was in the best interests of our clients, our people and our business. WPP's strategy for building multi-cultural marketing services will preserve our independence and what is special about UniWorld, but will also give us expanded resources and reach to enhance our client services and the career opportunities for our multi-cultural staff'.

Under the terms of the arrangement, UniWorld will continue to operate as a separate and autonomous business, working with various WPP companies to form co-operative ventures when it is beneficial to clients. UniWorld will work where appropriate with WPP's existing marketing units -- i.e., Mendoza Dillon and Asociados, a leading Hispanic agency; and the Market Segment Group, a brand consultancy specializing in multi-cultural and segmented markets -- to provide clients an unprecedented range of multi-cultural marketing insights and advice. The relationship will also allow UniWorld to leverage WPP's capabilities in research, healthcare, promotion and event marketing, media planning and buying, and interactive and new media.

Commenting on the alliance, John Zweig, CEO of WPP's Branding & Identity, Healthcare, and Specialist Communications businesses, said, "We are privileged to be joining forces with a firm of UniWorld's character and capabilities. This is a company that knows what it means to compete and to succeed, and Byron Lewis is an industry icon -- a real pioneer, with vision and passion in an area of great importance to WPP and to our clients. Now and increasingly, marketing must reflect the rich diversity of our culture, and we are thrilled by the opportunity that UniWorld, along side our other ethnic capabilities, now offers to provide both objective advice and integrated execution'.

Byron Lewis is Chairman of America's Black Forum, the nation's only African-American news program, hosted by Julian Bond, Chairman of the NAACP. He is also founder of the Acapulco Black Film Festival and 'Sounds of the City', a family dramatic radio serial. Mr. Lewis is also a Board member of the Phoenix House and the Apollo Foundation.

WPP Group plc ('WPP') is one of the largest communications services companies in the world. Through its 70 operating companies, it provides clients with advertising, media investment management, information & consultancy, public relations & public affairs, branding & identity, healthcare and specialist communications.

Leading WPP companies include J. Walter Thompson, Ogilvy & Mather Worldwide, MindShare, Kantar Media Research, Millward Brown, Research International, Hill and Knowlton, Ogilvy Public Relations Worldwide, CommonHealth and Enterprise IG. The Group employs 39,000 people in 950 offices in 92 countries. Clients include more than 300 of the Fortune 500 and over one third of the NASDAQ 100. In 1999, WPP had annual turnover (billings) of \$15 billion and revenues of \$3.5 billion.

On May 12, WPP announced the merger with Young & Rubicam Inc, subject to share-owner approval. Young & Rubicam is a world-ranking network of pre-eminent companies in advertising, perception management and public relations, brand identity and design consultancy, database marketing and customer relationship management, and healthcare communications.

The group has more than 339 offices in 73 countries and worldwide revenue of \$1.7 billion in 1999. Leading operating companies include Young & Rubicam, the advertising agency, The Media Edge, a global media company, Burson-Marsteller, the world's largest public relations firm, Cohn & Wolfe, a public relations firm known for innovative thinking, Sudler & Hennessey, the global healthcare agency and Landor Associates, the global branding consultancy, as well as ethnic agencies, Bravo Group and Kang & Lee.