

BARKLEYOKRP

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BARKLEY AND OKRP TO MERGE

Big indie model delivers creativity at scale that answers to consumers first

KANSAS CITY, Mo.; CHICAGO, (March 6, 2024) — Leading independent agencies Barkley and OKRP announced today they have merged to become BarkleyOKRP. This new entity combines two of the fastest-growing agencies in the U.S., both with proven track records for creating work that sparks with consumers and drives out-sized results for clients. With more than 650 employees across five offices in Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, New York and Pittsburgh, BarkleyOKRP is now one of the largest independent agencies in the country.

“In a world where the choice is often ‘big holding company’ or ‘small independent,’ BarkleyOKRP provides an alternative that marries the best of both worlds. We affectionately call it ‘*big indie*,’” said Jeff King, CEO of Barkley, who retains that role in the new agency. “OKRP has built a creative powerhouse, and Barkley, in addition to its own award-winning creative product, has built a foundation of modern consumer expertise. Combined, BarkleyOKRP clients will receive the very best of strategy and creativity in an agency that has broad capabilities and significant scale.”

“Barkley’s operation and leadership were instantly impressive – but what really locked this partnership is our mutual belief that our business is about selling and winning over the consumer, unapologetically,” explained Tom O’Keefe, CEO of OKRP, who will become creative chairman of the merged shop. “We embrace the fact that we are not the same agency when it comes to offerings; that our differences, now combined, make us both better.”

BarkleyOKRP’s combined client roster now includes Metro by T-Mobile, Burger King, Planet Fitness, Motel 6, Premier Protein and AMC, among many others. Both agencies are known for successfully competing on the national stage for major brands and attracting and retaining world-class talent. The combined agency will be led by a diverse and tenured executive leadership team comprised of discipline heads from both companies.

Barkley brings deep expertise in creative, strategy, research and consulting, taking an integrated, whole brand approach. It includes a 65-person content and social media studio, CRM services, media planning and buying, robust data analytics, performance media, and public relations and influencer practices. As a Certified B Corporation, it meets the highest standards for social and environmental performance.

OKRP has distinguished itself with a creative approach for clients such as Burger King and Metro by T-Mobile with work that captivates consumers, as was the case with last year’s “Whopper, Whopper” for BK. The agency has invested in advancing diversity, evident in its creation of Putney, a minority-owned business, which will remain an integral part of the newly formed agency.

Barkley and OKRP were brought together by Chicago-based private equity firm Keystone Capital. Keystone saw an opportunity for the two A-list agencies to create a new entity that leverages the award-winning power of both companies.

“This merger not only creates a powerful new platform today, but it sets the stage for continued investment to expand and strengthen our capabilities in all areas of the business, including media, data, analytics, performance marketing and technology,” added King.

About BarkleyOKRP

BarkleyOKRP is one of the largest full-service independent agencies in the U.S. As an alternative agency model, BarkleyOKRP is independent enough to make bold work that sticks with the modern consumer and big enough to build whole brands with our full spectrum of capabilities. The firm is also one of the largest Certified B Corporation agencies with industry recognition that includes four times on AdAge’s A-List, as well as being named AdAge “Small Agency of the Year - Culture,” Convergence “Fastest Growing Agencies,” and Adweek “Agency of the Year” shortlist, The 4A’s Foundation “Independent Agency of the Year” for DEIB practices, and the ANA’s Multicultural Excellence Award. Learn more at barkleyokrp.com.

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