Holding Company Succession

Publicis Groupe is sitting pretty as the world's largest holding company by market cap and revenue. But in agencyland, power dynamics shift faster than the rising tides.

Ten years ago, the French holding company was sitting on $5 billion of debt at a $4 billion valuation after making expensive bets on data-driven marketing, such as acquiring Sapient and Epsilon. At the same time, Publicis confronted a massive reorganization that pushed its agencies to shift from competitors to collaborators.



Fast-forward to today, and Publicis is in fighting shape while its holding company peers undergo their own transformations. WPP is years behind on the same consolidation journey Publicis embarked on a decade ago. And Omnicom and IPG are preparing to join forces in a blockbuster acquisition.

Meanwhile, amid industry consolidation, smaller holding companies like Dentsu and Havas have fallen behind in scale.

On this week’s episode of Adspeak, ad industry consultant Michael Farmer joins ADWEEK’s editor in chief Ryan Joe and executive editor Alison Weissbrot to discuss how Publicis rose to the top of the holding company pecking order—and what the next spin of the agency Wheel of Fortune might bring.

Recommended videos
https://www.adweek.com/agencies/holding-company-succession/