

Venables Bell & Partners Debuts New AI-Centric Offshoot Agency



Venables Bell & Partners is getting its own artificial intelligence-driven partner shop.

The San Francisco-based agency has announced a new offshoot firm called Braive, which aims to provide creative and strategic consulting services to help brand marketers hone their use of AI. While Braive will operate independently from the agency, it was developed in partnership with VB&P and co-founded by former VB&P brand strategy director Trace Cohen and tech entrepreneur Joe Kleinschmidt.

The services offered by Braive will begin with online workshops with brands, in which the firm will help marketers brainstorm and flesh out AI strategies to meet various business goals. Cohen said the firm's focus on building brand experiences and front-facing tools, rather than operational efficiencies, will help it stand out in a crowded field.

"The focus of the workshop is to build an AI strategy that is

aligned to the brand's purpose, its personality and to its people," Cohen told Adweek. "A lot of a lot of what we've seen out in the world is a lot of phenomenal AI and companies using AI to strengthen operations, to strengthen efficiency, but very few examples of AI being utilized to build brand value and to align [with] the brand's purpose."

As machine learning tech has boomed in the past few years, many agencies have opted to launch their own AI-focused divisions, including Deutsch, Heat and R/GA, while others have aimed to use AI more broadly across all of their operations. VB&P's development of and partnership with Braive represents a different approach, however.

"We've partnered with Venables because they're a brand that believes that humanity wins and humanity is the foundation of its work ... in a world that is increasingly artificial," Cohen said.

Development of Braive had been in the works well before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in the United States this March, and Cohen said there is still interest from brands despite the new economic conditions, although with an emphasis on more practical and realistic ambitions. Two-thirds of business executives reported in a recent survey that they would be going forward with planned AI projects in some form despite the current recession.

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