

# Why This Small New York Agency Bought Barton F. Graf's Computers

Gone but not forgotten, Barton F. Graf may have held its own funeral but its legacy lives on—and so do its computers.

Mojo Supermarket, an independent New York agency launched last October by Droga5 vet Mo Said, acquired Barton F. Graf's computers as an homage to the agency with a desire to continue making the kind of cutting-edge work Gerry Graf's shop spent a decade crafting.

Said explained that Mojo Supermarket found its unusual name when its first client said it needed help getting its mojo back, adding that he liked the idea of alluding to a supermarket where you can find what you need. It also happened to be the closest thing to his own name that he felt comfortable using.

Much earlier in his career, Said was confronted with a painful reminder of how much prejudice remained on both sides of the agency/client divide in the industry.

At the time, he was the creative lead for a client who said, "I don't want Muslims running the account," leading him to have to work behind the scenes with others at the agency who couldn't acknowledge his contributions, solely because of what his mother had decided to name him.

"I had to make people successful who legitimately hated me," he said. "Those realizations really push you."

It ultimately helped push Said to launch his own creative

venture, and he wanted to keep something from a shop that had served as a creative inspiration. "This agency is built on ideas that Barton F. Graf and Droga5 and all these people created," he said.

When he heard Barton F. Graf was closing, Said reached out to creative director Maddie Smith and asked, "I want Barton F. Graf in my agency—what can we take?"

Unable to acquire any office space in the agency's former home, Said decided to take the devices that had spawned the agency's distinctive brand of creative.

"Barton F. Graf especially had a sense of irresponsibility. We want to create a sense of irresponsibility here where a creative can make work that's incredibly weird," he added.

The Barton F. Graf news hit especially hard for Said on the heels of Droga5 being acquired by Accenture. "These were beacons of creativity, and we were reading in the trades that creativity is dying and data is taking over," he said. "We were holding on to these agencies in our minds [and] two of them fell really quickly."

"When Barton F. Graf shut down, as a creative who'd been in this business for years, I was sad," he said. "But as a creative starting an agency, I was excited to find what's next. There's much needed change in this industry, and sometimes we need a kick to the gut to find it."

He added that while creative icons like David Droga and Gerry Graf should be celebrated for pushing boundaries, the recent shifts will cause "more people [to] understand this business has to evolve. There are no unicorns."

Said joined Droga5 as a senior copywriter back in 2015 when the agency was still small enough that his creative director was David Droga, something he didn't realize at the time was unusual. After learning a lot, he realized the agency and its

place in the industry had shifted to the point where he wanted to start his own venture to have the freedom to work across a variety of clients.

David Droga himself was the first person Said told about the launch of Mojo Supermarket, and guided him through the launch process and remains an advisor to the agency.

Mojo Supermarket is among a class of new independent agencies attempting to evolve along with the changes that have shaped the industry in recent years.

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