



Press Release

George P. Johnson Appoints Interactive Marketing Expert Kevin Aires Director, Digital Experience

Premier experience marketing agency adds to worldwide digital talent pool as brands seek to integrate live and online marketing to drive immediate business impact

London, United Kingdom (April 27, 2009) – The world's premier experience marketing agency, George P. Johnson, today announced the appointment of veteran interactive marketer Kevin Aires to the position of Director, Digital Experience. The move affirms the emergence of a powerful new hybrid marketing model that blends a portfolio of live experiences and digital marketing to drive brand preference and immediate purchase behavior as well as long-term brand loyalty.

Aires joins the industry's foremost Program Strategy practice, which partners with some of the world's most recognizable brands to develop more integrated and precise marketing portfolios with a focus on efficiency, measurement and ROI. He brings with him a wealth of hands-on strategic and technical expertise in such areas as virtual events, social media, online community building and related platforms.

As part of the Program Strategy team, he will work with worldwide accounts to further advance the agency's strategic and operational framework around the convergence of live and digital experiences. This new hybrid marketing model emphasizes customers' total brand relationship across multiple touch points throughout the sales cycle, using live experiences and digital to ultimately activate customer behavior.

Aires comes most recently from IBM, where he spent nearly a decade in various engineering and consulting roles focused on developing software and best practices in enterprise project management and team collaboration. Within IBM's Global Business Services division, he played a leading role in creating and rolling out IBM's highly-successful global online alumni community.

As part of IBM's Global Web Strategy and Enablement division, he created and led virtual world development initiatives for global clients and served as a key evangelist of IBM's online technology and expertise to the marketplace.

"As brand marketers deal with a turbulent economy and dramatic changes in consumer buying habits, the marketing mix is re-balancing away from an advertising-centric model to a more engaging, interactive, and consumer-driven model that plays to the strengths of both live and online experience marketing," said Kim Myhre, Vice President and General Manager of GPJ in London. "Kevin's experience advances our ability to drive clients' performance in this new environment."

"We're seeing a fundamental shift in the ways that people look for information, connect with one another and make decisions about the products and services that they perceive advance their personal and professional lives," said Aires. "Today it's about authentic relationships and trust arising from consistent experiences – which are most powerful when delivered personally and relevantly. That means live and digital are permanently coming together in really interesting, effective ways to drive brand relationships. We're providing the strategy and resources to capture that power efficiently and cost-effectively and turn it into superior business performance."

Aires is based out of GPJ's London office and will collaborate with Strategy and Digital teams across GPJ's 26 worldwide offices. "The addition of Kevin to our agency with his deep experience in online – especially virtual worlds – and coming on the heels of earlier hires with digital backgrounds into our global Program Strategy practice further strengthens our ability to help our clients strategize integrated marketing strategies that meet the needs of a changing marketplace," said David Rich, SVP of Program Strategy/Worldwide.

Initial customers will include a roster of technology, consumer goods health care and automotive brands based in Western Europe as well as other markets.



About George P. Johnson (gpj.com)

GPJ is the premier worldwide experience marketing agency specializing in using branded live experiences and environments to help clients cut through marketplace noise, differentiate from the competition and create lasting relationships that directly impact the bottom line.

Through an integrated service offering that combines Program Strategy, Creative, Technology and Delivery capabilities, GPJ provides a full suite of relationship-building event, exhibit live and digital experience solutions that organizations use to drive deep brand engagement, preference and loyalty through customer-centric experience marketing campaigns. GPJ clients won 37 awards in 2008 alone, including five Ex Awards, an unprecedented achievement in the marketing industry.

Frequently cited for its thought leadership, GPJ is known for its annual *EventView* report, frequent white papers and standards-setting collaborations with leading event and marketing trade associations. Consistently ranked one of Advertising Age's "Top 25 Marketing Agencies", GPJ provides its services through 26 offices around the world.

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