

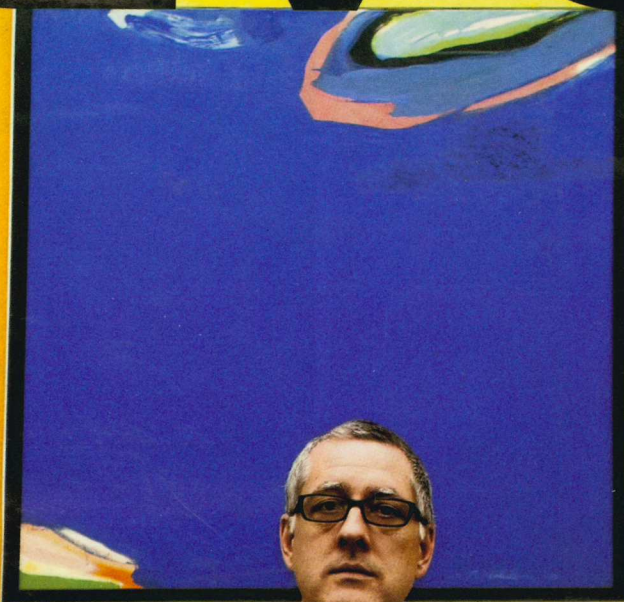
# Seven<sup>®</sup>

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THIS WEEK IN YOUR CITY

## FROM VEGAS, WITH GENIUS

In the depths of the recession, award-winning architect **Windom Kimsey** gambled on China. An inside look at his pioneering project.



### PLUS

A Vegas ad firm makes its *Pitch* for the big time

Raw dialogue with the EC Twins

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# Advertising Reality

Thanks to *The Pitch*, a local boutique agency gets to strut its creative stuff on a national stage

BY ELIZABETH SEWELL

One are the cigarettes, martini lunches and scurrying secretaries—advertising in the era of social media and equal rights doesn't look much like *Mad Men*. The reality behind how advertising works in the digital age is on full display on AMC's *The Pitch*, which features 15 ad agencies, including one from right here in Las Vegas, competing head-to-head for the business of a national company.

SK+G Marketing Communications has long been a major player in the Valley, having worked with clients such as Mandarin Oriental and MGM Resorts International. But on a national scale, it's still a boutique agency in the

middle of the desert. Which is what made an appearance on *The Pitch* so appealing to partners Jerry Kramer and John Schadler. "SK+G has world-class clients," Kramer says, "but we're still a stealth agency in the general advertising world."

The 14-day odyssey of filming the show began with SK+G's assigned client: Waste Management. Whereas the luxury market has been the shop's strength in the past, this Houston-based company, which helps communities and corporations intelligently dispose of or recycle their trash, was a decidedly different account. With just two weeks to develop a pitch, it was imperative to take ideas from any source available,

and under the pressure of reality TV's watchful eye, SK+G gelled as a company, getting ideas from every department. "Never before have we included so many people in the creative process," Kramer says. "Everyone really got to contribute."

And be on camera. AMC's crew tailed SK+G's creative team, including senior VP Ellen Curtis and senior VP of strategy and account management Jim Gentleman, throughout the 14-day process, even following them home. SK+G creative director Doug Hentges was filmed amid his crying children after a long day at work, in a scene that made the show's trailer.

Overall, stripping down the creative process for the cameras was easy for the

team, which didn't hold back or change the way it works. "Some ad agencies have said they don't want to reveal their 'secret sauce,'" Hentges says. "That is bullshit. There is no secret sauce; there are just creative people."

So what did the creative people at SK+G eventually present to Waste Management? We can't exactly say. The episode of *The Pitch* featuring SK+G (vs. The Ad Store of New York) airs 9 p.m. April 30. That's when the winner will be revealed.

Win or lose, Kramer and Schadler see the show as a way to demonstrate that creative minds exist outside of Madison Avenue. "It's sometimes difficult to get certain kinds of creative people [in Las Vegas], and this will make it easier," Kramer says. "You are going to see this agency with national accounts out of this. I guarantee it." 7

## Style Watch

In a nod to the TV show that inspired *The Pitch*, we outfitted SK+G in mid-century styles. Ellen Curtis is decked out in Banana Republic, with the boys (from left: Jerry Kramer, John Schadler, Jim Gentleman and Doug Hentges) also wearing styles from the retailer in addition to clothing courtesy of Saks Fifth Avenue and Kenneth Cole.