

# The Karma Communications Group

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## KARMA COMMUNICATIONS UNITES CREATIVITY, DIGITAL AND DATA WITH THE ACQUISITION OF CRAYON

**Thursday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012, London.** Today the [Karma Communications Group](#) announces its next major step in fulfilling its ambition to create a new integrated force in the independent sector of the marketing communications industry, by combining creativity with data-driven digital and direct expertise. This entails the acquisition of the [Crayon group](#), the leading UK-based digital communications agency, to work alongside [Karmarama](#), one of the UK's most highly regarded independent integrated advertising agencies. Karma Communications aims to grow into an international challenger agency group, providing clients with best-in-class creative solutions across every step of the customer journey.

The Karma Communications Group came into existence with the announcement in May 2011 of the investment by Phoenix Equity Partners, the UK-based mid market private equity investor, in Karmarama, together with its sister agencies [Kream](#) and [Kaper](#). The group is owned jointly by Phoenix and its senior management team.

Crayon was founded in 1998 as Hicklin Slade and Partners. Its principal shareholders are Senior Partners Matthew Brown, Justin Hicklin, and Mark Runacus. Following a number of acquisitions, it re-branded as Crayon in 2009. The group comprises a number of operating entities: Crayon London – its integrated digital marketing services agency; data analytics-based customer insights consultancy, Crayon CI; technology and software services provider, Zigzag; and market research agency, Walk a Mile.

Following today's announcement, the Karma Communications Group will have over 250 professional staff across the Crayon and Karmarama groups, serving a range of clients including: BT; Camelot; Honda; Lloyds Banking Group; the BBC; Nintendo; Costa; and Unilever. It is intended to co-locate all Karma Communications businesses in 2012 to facilitate the delivery of a truly integrated offering for clients.

Commenting on this news Charles Watson, Chairman of the Karma Communications Group said: *"Today marks the next milestone in the development of the Karma Communications group. The combination of the creative capabilities of Karmarama with Crayon's data-driven digital expertise will enable us to service the ever-increasing requirements of our clients' brands across the full extent of the customer journey. We look forward in the near future to announcing the next steps in Karma Communications' development, with the strong support of our investment partner, Phoenix. In the meantime, I am delighted to welcome the Crayon senior team as colleagues and co-shareholders in Karma Communications."*

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Justin Hicklin, of Crayon added: *“We have grown dramatically over the last decade from our origins as a direct marketing and sales promotion agency into the data driven digital agency of today. We wanted to continue that aggressive development within the UK and internationally, and felt it was time to identify the best partners to help realise our ambition. One of the challenges we have faced is finding the best way of accessing capital to continue investing in our growth, whilst retaining the independence and entrepreneurialism that is so central to the culture of our business. Today’s news provides the perfect solution and we are thrilled to be joining our new like-minded colleagues. By becoming a key component of Karma Communications, I am confident that the opportunities which will arise for our people and clients alike are substantial.”*

Ben Bilboul CEO of Karmarama said: *“On behalf of all my colleagues at Karmarama, Kream and Kaper, I am delighted to welcome into our extended family all our new colleagues from across the Crayon businesses. Crayon has an extremely sophisticated, data-driven understanding of customer behavior, which we fully intend to put at the heart of our creative development process. It’s a perfect marriage of art and science that we believe will better serve today’s clients and their customers.”*

*Ends*

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**Notes to Editors:**

The combined business can now offer clients everything from brand creation to data management and award-winning technology solutions across the entire customer journey. Existing client arrangements remain unchanged. Crayon was advised by Results International.

**About Crayon**

Crayon is an integrated agency. Crayon believe in 'better connected ideas' - ideas that work together across channels, harnessing the best insight, creative and technology with an absolute focus on results.

We have three specialist subsidiaries Crayon Ci for data and consumer insight, Walk A Mile – an independent research agency and Zigzag, an innovative technology division.

Our approach has attracted forward thinking brands such as British Gas, BT, Honda, Lloyds Banking Group and Sony.

**About Karmarama:**

Karmarama was founded in 2000 and has grown rapidly to become acknowledged as one of the leading creative independent agencies in the UK with a fast growing list of high profile clients which includes Nintendo, the BBC, Costa, BT Plusnet and Unilever. The business is the UK's fastest growing top 25 creative agency, regularly features in Campaign's top 10 new business league table and was voted 27th in the 'Sunday Times Best Small Companies to Work For 2011'. In May 2011, Karmarama was awarded 'Agency of the Year 2011' at Marketing Week's Engage Awards. [www.karmarama.com](http://www.karmarama.com)

Karmarama's two sister agencies, content and production company Kream ([www.kreamlondon.com](http://www.kreamlondon.com)) and PR company Kaper ([www.kaper.uk.com](http://www.kaper.uk.com)) also help to make up Karma Communications Group. Both agencies are good examples of Karmarama's creative and entrepreneurial approach to marketing communications.