



Admen: Dentsu Network West CEO Tim Andree (right) and Dentsu Chief Creative Officer Kotaro Sugiyama are interviewed in New York on Nov. 9. JIJI

## 'The Dentsu Way' puts admen on new plain

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Tim Andree was near the end of his career as a professional basketball player in the U.S. National Basketball Association when he arrived in Japan in 1984 in search of an opportunity to play basketball and do business at the same time.

Last month, he published a book on advertising, having become a senior executive of Dentsu Inc., the nation's largest advertising agency.

The book, "The Dentsu Way," is coauthored by Andree — Dentsu's first non-Japanese executive officer — and Kotaro Sugiyama, the company's chief creative officer.

Explaining Dentsu's unique advertising strategies that use various communications tools, including cartoons, movies and social media, "The Dentsu Way" represents the ambitions of Dentsu, and Andree, to make the company a major global player in the advertising market.

As head of Dentsu Network West, which oversees the company's operations in North and South America and Europe, Andree is in a good position to know the challenges facing Dentsu, which is one of the world's largest advertising agencies in revenue but has had little recognition outside Japan.

"When I joined Dentsu four years ago, there was a time when I was calling people and trying to get meetings, no one would call me back," recalled Andree.

He pulled off a series of major acquisitions, including that of top U.S. branding agency McGarry Bowen in 2008.

Under his watch, the number of Dentsu's employees in the Americas and Europe doubled to about 1,400.

Now, there are only two Japanese companies on Dentsu's top 10 client list in North America. In 2006, they were all Japanese.

"We are still very small. I keep saying we are like a startup. But we've grown dramatically from where we were," Andree said.

Dentsu needs top foreign talent, such as Andree, for a good reason.

The Japanese advertising market, which accounts for more than 90 percent of Dentsu's total revenue, fell 15.6 percent to ¥5.9 trillion in 2007-2009, as more Japanese companies shifted overseas for better business opportunities.

Top Japanese multinationals, including Toyota Motor Corp. and Honda Motor Co., spend 60 to 70 percent of their advertising budgets overseas. For Dentsu, diversifying its revenue base is essential for its survival.

But Dentsu has not always been successful in winning contracts outside Japan, even from Japanese companies, in the face of competition from so-called mega-agencies — Britain's WPP Group PLC and France's Publicis Groupe as well as Omnicom Group Inc. and The Interpublic Group of Companies Inc., both American.

"Our traditional Japanese accounts are not going to stay with us just because we have a powerful office in Tokyo," Andree warned. "We have to have powerful people and great talent in the United States, Europe, Latin America and China."