

# Agency Known by the Companies It Keeps

## **The Communications Group:**

Full service marketing, advertising and public relations firm specializing in strategically oriented, results-driven programs.

**Number of Employees:** 20

## **Top Executive:**

Dan Cowling, president; Neal Moore, principal; Dane Cowling, principal

## **Product or Service:**

Marketing, advertising, public relations, outreach and education, media planning, creative materials, direct-response, MPACT Planning™

**Year Founded:** 1987

communications|group



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There's an adage often heard in The Communications Group: *Good agencies don't make good clients; good clients make good agencies.* The firm has the powerhouse companies on its client roster to prove it. Clients such as Baldor Electric and Bank of the Ozarks — two of Arkansas' premier performers — along with a host of other “quiet giants” such as Innovation Industries in Russellville, the nation's leading manufacturer of elevator components, and LaCroix Optical in Batesville, maker of high-quality optics, may explain why the company has experienced a 100 percent increase in size and billings in the past five years.

The agency also is known throughout the region for its niche in outreach and education and health care campaigns. Clients include White River Medical Center, BreastCare, Healthy Arkansas, the Delta Regional Authority — an eight-state federal agency — Healthy Baby, the Department of Arkansas Heritage and Arkansas BioPrepared.

Dan Cowling, agency president, said good clients recognize the need for strategically driven marketing campaigns. “Successful organizations demand results. Our clients understand that mission-driven strategy has to be the basis for all of their advertising and marketing programs,” he said. “Clients like Bank of the Ozarks, who are on a hot track of growth, want to know that their agency is in tune with their strategy and able to execute on a dime.”

Large, successful clients often require very unique services. Dane Cowling, another agency partner (brother of President Dan Cowling), cites Baldor's Media Week as an example. “We have 100 major publishers from the U.S. and Canada make presentations in our office eight hours a day, for a week. We evaluate each publication, negotiate the best package for the client,

then have a 12-month media plan developed within weeks,” Dane Cowling said. “International companies like Baldor — who distribute the highest quality products and are focused on customer service — expect their agency to do the same.”

Creative Director Neal Moore, another of the agency's partners, pointed to the BioPrepared program as another example of the company's unique work. “We developed self-contained crisis response kits to be used in every county in the event of a bioterrorism attack. The program is recognized as a national model,” Moore said.

Another niche is developing public-private partnerships. Getting private sector health providers like Baptist Health, St. Bernards, Washington Regional Medical Center and Northwest Health and public agencies like the Department of Health & Human Services and Medicaid together to develop a prenatal care program is unheard of in other states, but it is one of the company's specialties. The agency produces the “Happy Birthday Baby Book,” in its 14th year, which is distributed to 67 percent of pregnant women in Arkansas.

The firm worked collaboratively with state agencies and national consumer products giants Gerber Products and Eli Lilly and Company to produce the governor's popular 148-page “Healthy Arkansas Better State of Health Guidebook.” Health care advocates have lauded the book as a national model for encouraging healthy lifestyles.

Good clients are the foundation for The Communications Group's success; however, Dan Cowling offers one caveat: “Without the expertise and skill of the agency's diverse staff, our ‘good client’ formula would only be partially complete,” he said. “We have the best staff and the best clients in the region.”