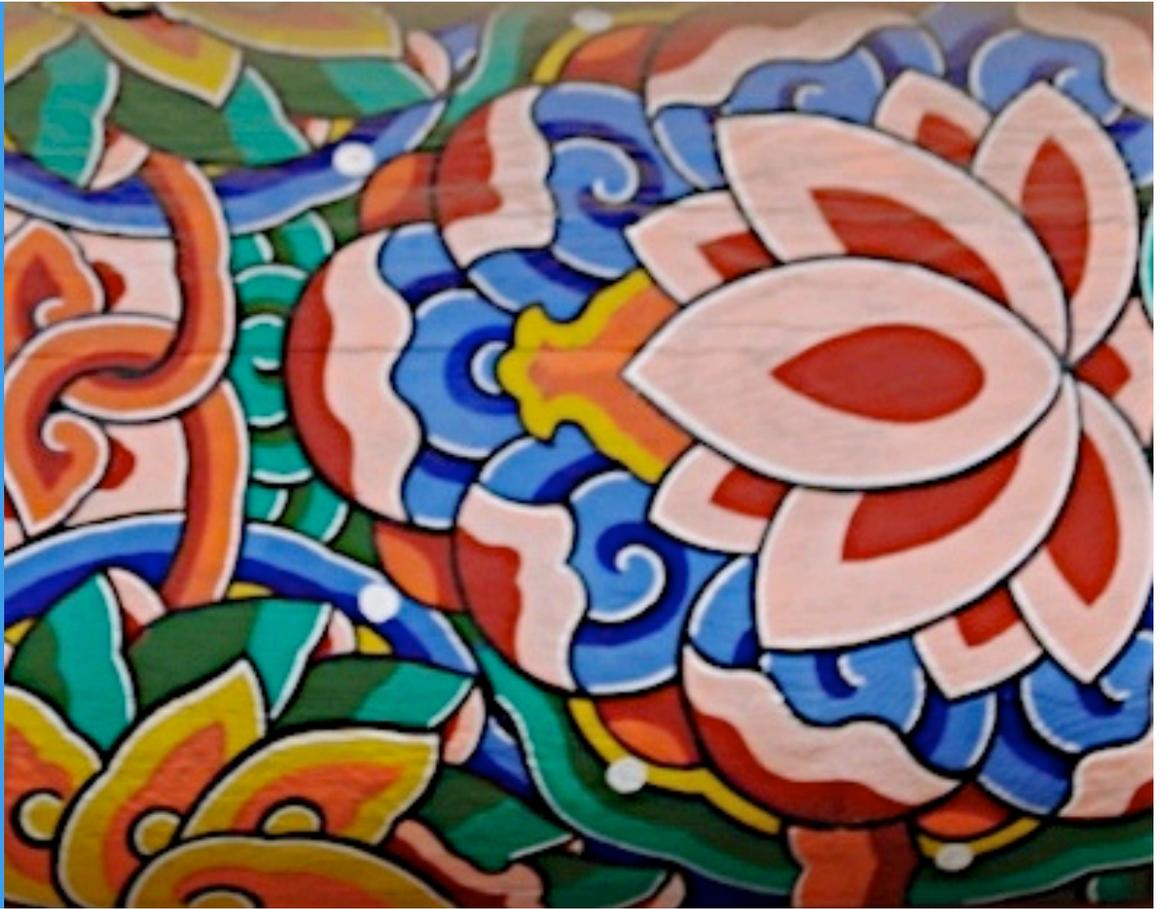


*As a disclaimer, the viewpoints of this case study are solely the opinions of Don Southerton and Bridging Culture Worldwide.*



## 2011 Bridging Culture Worldwide Case Study Success Story— Initiative Media Worldwide

Bridging Culture Worldwide supports a number of Korean business-related global organizations. Many are in the automotive industry and many are with related marketing and media companies. Why? Two reasons, the first being that top Korean auto maker, Hyundai and Kia Motors, has a huge overseas operation reaching across diverse cultures —BCW provides vital cross-cultural consulting and training.

The second reason is that the auto sector requires massive promotional and marketing campaigns that run into billions of dollars annually—global media and marketing firms are eager to partner with the Korean firms to provide these services.

This case study looks at Initiative Media Worldwide (Initiative), its relationship with Hyundai and Kia Motors in the United States, and the importance of cross-cultural understanding in global media partnerships.

# 2011 Bridging Culture Worldwide Case Study Success Story— Initiative Media Worldwide

## Background

Part of the Interpublic Group, Initiative Media is a media, marketing, and digital company. They are seen as one of the world's leading media strategy, planning and activation companies - with over thirty years of experience, and a network spanning six continents, with 90 offices in 69 countries. At their core, Initiative's focus is to grow brands and build businesses.

In January 2008, Initiative was named media agency of record by Hyundai Motors America (HMA) and Kia Motors America (KMA). The decision concludes a competitive review process that began in October 2007. At that time, industry reports indicated that Hyundai/Kia annual U.S. measured media spending totaled approximately \$750 million. An added dimension to the account was that media buying and strategy for HMA and KMA was in partnership with the media management organization WMG (now part of and known as Innocean Worldwide Americas).

In particular, Initiative has developed some breakthrough successes on Hyundai/Kia's behalf...

Early successes for the new account included the Fall 2008 launch of the Genesis, followed by a high profile presence in the 2009 Super Bowl, which touted the newly won honor of North American Car of the Year.

The integrated multi-channel campaign resulted in a 43% improvement in brand favorability, a massive increase in Hyundai search queries and a 200% increase in website traffic.

This was then followed by a presence in the 2009 Winter Olympics and as the exclusive automotive sponsor of the Academy Awards.

Successes have continued with the expansion of 2010 and 2011's Super Bowl presence to include a large component of social media to both heighten and extend Internet conversations surrounding both Hyundai and Kia.



주류기업 문화 체험에 나선 웨스트 프로그램 학생들이 글로벌 광고 마케팅 기업 '이니셔티브'의 미디어랩을 둘러보고 있다.

**Caption: Korean students in the WEST program visit the Emerging Media Lab at the LA office of Initiative Media to experience American company culture.**

***Korea Daily LA (Joongang Ilbo) July 3, 2009***



### **Workshops, Coaching, and Consulting**

To their credit, early on Initiative's leadership quickly recognized the Korean dimension of their new relationship. Soon after establishing their LA-based Hyundai and Kia account teams, Initiative engaged BCW to provide onsite training and coaching for their teams. Class content included insights into Korea and its culture, along with Hyundai and Kia's history, corporate culture, workplace expectations, and common etiquette. The workshops were also highly interactive providing answers to questions that had surfaced in day-to-day business with the new clients.

Key to Initiative's cross-cultural approach has also been providing ongoing support and consulting to management and leadership. For example, this has included Korea culture coaching to new account leads. BCW also prepared executives for high-level meetings with visiting senior management from Korea and prepped teams for Korea trips.

## 2011 Bridging Culture Worldwide Case Study Success Story— Initiative Media Worldwide

An interesting outcome of the Korea-facing business relationship is that Initiative has also continued to embrace Korean culture, especially in the LA community. For example in June 2009, 12 Korean students who were taking the language portion of the WEST (Work Study English Travel) program at UCLA visited Initiative Media to learn about American corporate culture.

The WEST students attended a presentation conducted by Initiative Media LA managing director Fred Sattler. The presentation shared background on the global media company, recent industry trends, and a case study on its brand launch for the Hyundai Genesis. After the presentation, the students had Q&A time to learn more about the culture and business of major marketing companies.

The students also had an opportunity to experience the latest in media research and development by touring Initiative's very cool Emerging Media Lab. (see photo). A major Korean language newspaper JoongAng Ilbo covered the event, too.

### **Success**

In closing, the key to the success of Initiative's Korean cross cultural training has been the strong endorsement of the firm's CEO Richard Beaven, senior management, and the HR team. As an organization they realize that their teams need resources. Expecting employees to "get it" without training and coaching rarely works.

We're proud to work with Initiative and their team. They mindfully approach the partnership with their clients with cross-cultural sensitivity and openness.

If you have questions on implementing a program to support your team, please feel to contact Bridging Culture Worldwide at [dsoutherton@bridgingculture.com](mailto:dsoutherton@bridgingculture.com) or call 1-310-866-3777.