



## **Via Acquisition, Octagon Gains "Access" to Expertise Deeply Rooted In Urban, Multicultural Insights**

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### **Via Acquisition, Octagon Gains "Access" to Expertise Deeply Rooted In Urban, Multicultural Insights**

*Veteran Marketer Tru Pettigrew's Team To Be Based In New York*

NORWALK, CT – Global sports and entertainment sponsorship and consulting leader Octagon has acquired urban and multicultural agency, Alloy Access, dramatically expanding its urban/multicultural offering and rebranding the unit as Octagon Access. As a result of the acquisition, the Octagon Access urban and multicultural client portfolio is expanded to include among others: adidas, Allstate, Bank of America, BMW, Castrol, GSN, Hennessy, MasterCard, Tr3s, Sprint, Susan G. Komen for the Cure and The Home Depot.

Octagon Marketing Americas President, Jeff Shifrin, described the acquisition as a strategic growth initiative. "The urban and multicultural market will play an increasingly vital role in brands' marketing programs and we see this as an enhancement to our already strong multicultural offering, headed by group director, Matt Neidl, and an opportunity to set Octagon apart in that arena."

Former Alloy Access head and now Octagon Access senior vice president, Tru Pettigrew, said the decision was an easy one. "We realized that our business philosophy, shared values, work ethic and familial culture were so strongly aligned, our team would flourish as part of Octagon. In turn, we agreed that our joining Octagon would take their established multicultural offering to another level." Pettigrew said. "We see ourselves as strategic solutions providers and trusted advisors to some of the nation's most preeminent brands -- not simply tactical vendors -- and, like Octagon's, our approach had always been led by consumer insights."

Jeff Ehrenkranz, Octagon executive vice president and head of the agency's Marketing Solutions unit, led the successful acquisition and explained how Octagon Access will differentiate itself in the market. "What we have seen over the years is that many agencies claimed to be able to connect with these segments, but they were very limited and tactical in their thinking and approach. Too often, these shops went with what they thought the client wanted or expected and that led to stereotypical programs. Tru and his team think differently and provide different solutions," Ehrenkranz said.

Pettigrew agreed. "Ours has always been an approach based on empowerment and inspiration. We strive to partner with urban and multicultural consumers, empower them with research-based knowledge/insights and then inspire the representative communities

to have a say in programs by creating real and relevant ways to get and send information/messages across trusted platforms,” he said.

According to Shifrin, Octagon Access will be exploring opportunities to leverage proprietary Octagon tools and analytics into the division’s expanded offering including ways to integrate Passion Drivers® research and the increasing use of digital, social and mobile technology which is heavily used within the urban and multicultural communities.

“As brands struggle to reach consumers, we can differentiate Octagon by showing we understand how to develop programs with messages that are seamlessly integrated and consistent across all technology platforms,” Shifrin explained.

According to Pettigrew, one of the key roles Octagon Access will continue to play is that of educator. “We realize that we know things about the urban & multicultural community to be true but that a lot of brands are not there yet. As such, we know we will be playing the role of educator before we take on the role of activator. We know much of the activity in this space results from stereotypical -- albeit well-intentioned thinking -- about what the audience wants. That’s where our philosophy of empowering and inspiring communities to develop a representative voice about the products and services marketed to them becomes so important,” he said, citing work for MTV Tr3s as a case in point.

“Tr3s turned to us to gain a comprehensive understanding of today’s young, Latino (bi-cultural) lifestyle and explore their relationship with music, entertainment and media. We launched and maintained the Tr3s Cooltura Panel, which was made up of 150 bicultural Latinos ages 14-34 in five major markets who speak both English and Spanish,” he said. Pettigrew’s team branded the panel to provide maximum visibility to Tr3s and its efforts to serve this target in new and relevant ways. The results provided insights that guided Tr3s marketing and programming and earned praise from the client for audience feedback that showed consumers were seeking programming that highlighted what Latinos have in common with each other, the ways Latinos are different from non-Latinos and the nuances and differences between countries of origin. “All of these insights provided the client with the tools needed to build a campaign that was regarded by the Latino audience as genuine,” Pettigrew explained.

Joining Pettigrew are long-time colleagues Andre’ Pinard, Bobby Jones and Loretta Cox, “We have been a team for more than seven years and we are deeply rooted in the cultures and lifestyles of urban & multicultural consumers,” Pettigrew said.

Octagon Access offices are located at 161 Avenue of the America’s (6th Ave) 7th Floor, New York, NY 10013.