

MERKLEY AND PARTNERS ADDS O'CHARLEY'S TO THEIR CLIENTELE



New York-based, 17 year old advertising firm **Merkley and Partners** will be adding **O'Charley's** casual-dining chain to its list of clients which already includes **Arby's**, **Aunt Jemima**, **Duncan Hines**, **Nutella**, and **Vlasic** in their portfolio. O'Charley's had previously been with **The Buntin Group** of Nashville, Tennessee, founded in 1942. The Buntin Group is ranked in the top 40 of the United States' independent agencies and in the top 100 nationwide. Annually, they bill about \$150 million to their clients. President and CEO of The Buntin Group, Jeffrey Buntin, Jr., had said the plan to separate themselves from O'Charley's had been in the works for over six months, "We notified O'Charley's management that we believed it (was) in the agency's best interest to end our relationship. They have been great partners for many, many years and we wish them all the best." Merkley and Partners's history and experience with casual dining and similar brands is appealing to O'Charley's Vice President of Marketing, Nancy Keil-Culbertson, "Their ability to consistently create traffic-driven marketing promotions without compromising brand image was pivotal in reaching our decision." Everyone seems positive about the switch, especially CEO of Merkley and Partners, Alex Gellert, "O'Charley's is a great restaurant brand and this is the kind of assignment we really love."

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