

Peppercomm: Pushing Boundaries for the Next 20 Years



By Jackie Kolek, Partner and Managing Director, [Peppercomm](#)

Last month, we celebrated Peppercomm's 20th anniversary. Started by co-founders Ed Moed and [Steve Cody](#) in what Steve likes to call Ed's "squalid" one-bedroom apartment, Peppercomm has grown from a two-person to start-up to a 125-person firm with offices in New York, San Francisco, Boulder, CO, and London. But more important, we've evolved from a traditional public relations company to a fully-integrated communications and marketing firm with deep expertise in the consumer lifestyle, financial and professional services and industrial/B2B industries.

Early in 2015, we took advantage of this upcoming milestone to take a look at the firm's brand positioning, visual identity and website to ensure that they truly reflect where the firm and the industry are headed over the next 20 years. By putting ourselves in our clients' shoes, we recognized that our approach of listening to our clients' audiences first, last and always remains a valuable and differentiated way of thinking. However, this didn't really speak to our clients' pain points.

Leveraging Peppercomm's own Insights and Strategy team, we delved deeper into those pain points. We interviewed clients and prospects, we talked to our peers and colleagues in the

industry and we examined our competitive set. What we uncovered was that Peppercomm's ability to push boundaries is what attracts our clients and keeps them with us for more than 15 years in some cases. It's what helps us deliver bottom-line results for clients and what helps them to keep ahead of their competition. It's also what has helped us to attract and retain top talent both from within the industry and from non-traditional backgrounds.

Whether it's a highly-regulated professional services firm executing online thought leadership via social media for the first time, a hedge fund opening up its website, a luxury auto brand trying to attract a younger Millennial audience and change the exiting brand perception or a global pharmaceutical company using comedy to improve storytelling and break down barriers between its teams, Peppercomm helps its clients push the boundaries to reach and engage audiences with right messaging on the right platforms. But, we do it in a way that both mitigates risk and delivers measurable results that show real ROI.

Armed with this insight, we updated our brand positioning and created a refreshed visual identity with a new "P" icon that breaks through a box in a subtle and sophisticated way. Our totally new website speaks directly to our audiences' needs and provides them with information in a way they want to consume it, rather than how we want to serve it up.

As we look forward to the next 20 years, brands will continue to be faced with myriad challenges – engaging with the Next Gen, Millennials and Gen Z, reaching new niche audiences, understanding how to leverage new digital and social platforms and grappling with new regulations. By listening to their audiences first, Peppercomm strives to help clients understand these audiences and apply our knowledge and experience across the fully integrated spectrum of paid, owned and earned platforms to create compelling content that pushes boundaries to engage audiences and drive real ROI.

About the Author: Jackie leads many of the firm's financial services accounts and has deep expertise in the wealth advisory and personal finance space. She specializes in working with companies with complex or highly technical products and services to package them into compelling stories that engage target audiences. Jackie also leads crisis simulation workshops, where we help clients develop and test crisis processes. She has been quoted in and written articles for industry publications including *The Firm Voice*, *PR Strategist*, *PR Week*, and *Investment News*. Jackie serves on boards of the PRSA Financial Communications Section.