

Nick Green, joint CEO of marketing services company Tangent Communications, has guided his company to a series of successful acquisitions in the last two years. And, as **Richard Rivlin** discovers, when things are moving you can't keep a good man down

It is early morning in a City restaurant but Nick Green, the joint chief executive at Tangent Communications, doesn't need any coffee to gee himself up. The energy and enthusiasm for his AIM-listed marketing services business is contagious, but it is a good time for the business so he should be smiling.

He is just days away from announcing strong increases in both annual sales and profits to investors, proving that the management of Tangent is as adept at integrating acquisitions as it is at making them. The last year saw Tangent complete the acquisition of Newcastle's Ravenscroft Digital Services, which produces estate agents brochures for hundreds of independent firms across the UK. It also digested C360, recently renamed Tangent Labs, which has just launched the new website for the Labour leadership campaign plus individual sites for 108 Labour MPs.

Green smiles at the irony of the contract. His uncle, Michael Green of Carlton Communications fame, owns a third of Tangent and gave David Cameron his big break by making him his corporate affairs director. But our Nick Green is not going to let any political issues detract from building his company.

Life in the fast lane

During the last year, he and his brother Tim, who is the other joint chief executive, have begun to understand all that is involved with running a

Richard Green



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fast-growing public company. Nick is focused on sales, marketing and dealing with the City, while Tim is the technology guru. "It is exciting but we feel we have spent many years learning our trade and are now enjoying the opportunity of developing a distinct business," says the former.

He began his career in the commercial department of Telegraph Media Group before moving to Teletext. But it was when he was lured by US-owned Advertising.com to become sales and marketing director that his commercial education moved on to the next level. There he watched client companies fall in love with marketing that was performance-based and measurable.

So when AOL paid \$439m for Advertising.com in 2004 it seemed the right moment to apply these skills to his own business. This began with the reverse takeover of Documedia Solutions in June 2005, quickly renamed Tangent. "I have always been interested in helping companies get their messages across," he explains. "But I also am fascinated by technology and wanted to do something that would ensure our clients could see the benefits of working with us."

Blues and Greenes

Blue-chip clients now include Greene King, Next and Wolseley, which use Tangent's systems to produce local marketing campaigns off the back of a proprietary system that can track the spend of each publication, shop assistant or regional manager. Greene King can, for instance, run promotions allowing its publicans to create posters within defined guidelines for their own events. These will be created and delivered to the pub within 24 hours. Meanwhile, the finance department at Greene King can track exactly how much is being spent.

It was the purchase of Documedia,

however, that introduced Green to Rosenblatt Solicitors. "They were on the other side when we bought Documedia," he says. "They were upfront and to the point and we thought they would be a good representative for our growing company." This proved to be a shrewd decision when it came to the recent acquisition of Ravensworth.

This began originally as an enterprising letter written by Green to his counterpart at Ravensworth complimenting him on his business and seeking a conversation. Eight months and £5.85m later and the business was bought, adding a new dimension to Tangent, providing it with a fantastic share of estate agents in the UK.

"There was a moment when Tessa Laws and the Tangent team were on a train to Newcastle," Green explains. "It was a key moment in the deal which looked like it could crater. Tessa was absolutely focused and clear about the issues to address. She got it all sorted and was absolutely spot on."

That deal could prove to be the turning point in the development of the Tangent business. Green is particularly animated by the prospect of what the new home information packs could do for the business. "It could be great," he says. "You budget and forecast and work hard with your clients. Then one day the Government makes an announcement making something like this mandatory and it can overnight add a totally new and incredibly important dimension to the business."

There is no doubting the ambition of Nick Green. A phantom bid for the significantly larger St Ives came to nothing last year but he remains focused on running a larger operation. That is going to mean more contracts, more clients and more deals, which should ensure he remains totally in his element – and without any need for caffeine, whatever time of day or night it is |