



MEDIA RELEASE

Virgin Money and iLeo claim world's most awarded DM campaign

31 January 2005 – Virgin Credit Card's 'Plastic Surgery' campaign tops the awards tally as the most honoured direct marketing campaign of 2004, according to a new analysis of the world's leading DM awards by The Won Report.

The Won Report (www.wonreport.com) tracks wins at international and national awards shows such as the Echo Awards, the Cannes Lions Direct, the John Caples International Awards and Australia's ADMA Awards.

Virgin Money marketing director, Chris Thornton, said the honour is another feather in the cap of Australia's DM industry. "We're really punching above our weight on the world stage right now. Australian campaigns across the board are consistently performing well, especially when you look at the population compared to the U.S. or Europe. As a client I'm extremely pleased that the work is being awarded for effectiveness - it certainly helps change the mind-set of marketing being seen as a cost line. We're really a profit line."

Patrick Collister, author of The Won Report, told global industry newsletter DMNews that "Plastic Surgery is a worthy No. 1, being big in every sense and taking three per cent of a mature credit card market within ten months while also enhancing all those Virgin brand values we all know."

The honour caps off a stellar year for Virgin Money and 'Plastic Surgery' campaign creator, iLeo. Accolades snapped up by the 'Plastic Surgery' campaign in 2004 include:

- Direct Marketing Association Echo Awards – Diamond International Echo;
- Cannes Lions Direct Awards – three Gold Lions;
- John Caples International Awards – one Gold and two Silver; and
- AMI National Awards for Marketing Excellence – Marketing Program of the Year.

Mr Thornton attributes the campaign's success to a combination of "a cut-through approach in a market crying out for innovation; a strong local Virgin brand; a multi-channel integrated strategy with no pre-conceived ideas of what would or wouldn't work; and a shared risk remuneration agreement that aligns our agency with us commercially."

Joel Norton, Head of iLeo is effusive about the contributing factors. "The alignment of the two companies' business objectives was paramount. iLeo was empowered to produce powerful, cut-through creative and manage its implementation through any justifiable media. Budgets were directly linked to a clear CPA benchmark – inefficient media spend and creative could be quickly optimised to both parties' benefit. The result - iLeo and Virgin Money combined to revolutionise the credit card market in Australia."

– ENDS –

Further Info:

Kirsty Lamont, Public Affairs Manager, Virgin Money
(02) 8249 8028 / 0400 411 148
kirsty.lamont@virginmoney.com

Joel Norton, Head of iLeo
(02) 9931 6905 / 0438 355 018
joel.norton@ileo.com.au

About Virgin Money:

Virgin Money launched in Australia in May 2003 to shake up the financial services industry. Virgin Money's first product, the Virgin Credit Card, is the first to combine a low interest rate, no annual fees and up to 55 interest free days with valuable, instant rewards. In the UK, Virgin Money offers a wide range of financial products including credit cards, personal loans, savings account, unit trusts, pensions, share dealing and general insurance. Virgin Money is wholly owned by the Virgin Group. There's no funny stuff, just money stuff. <http://virginmoney.com.au>