



## Digital agency Rosetta plans to bring nearly 400 jobs to new downtown Cleveland offices

By Michelle Jarboe, The Plain Dealer

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Rosetta, the nation's largest independent interactive agency, plans to consolidate its local offices and nearly 400 jobs in a building at 629 Euclid Ave. in downtown Cleveland. The agency, which is based in New Jersey and has offices in Beachwood and Independence, wants to build a rooftop penthouse for client meetings, training events and entertainment. The penthouse level would include conference rooms, a cafe and a patio with a putting green.

### Updated at 4:15 p.m.

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- An interactive marketing agency plans to bring nearly 400 jobs to downtown Cleveland, into a largely empty office building just off Euclid Avenue near East Fourth Street.

Rosetta, the nation's largest independent digital agency, is signing a 10-year lease on 80,000 square feet in a former National City building at 629 Euclid Ave. The company, based in Hamilton, N.J., aims to move its Beachwood and Independence offices downtown in the fall.

Members of Cleveland City's Council's community and economic development and finance committees voted this afternoon to approve incentives for developer MRN Ltd., which owns the former National City building. Under the package, set to go before the full City Council tonight, MRN would receive \$610,000 in forgivable city loans to assist with renovations of Rosetta's space.

MRN, the Maron family company best known for turning East Fourth Street into an entertainment district, would keep that money, as long as Rosetta maintains

### About Rosetta

**Founded:** 1998

**Headquarters:** Hamilton, N.J., near Princeton.

**Employees:** Approximately 715, with 356 of them in the Cleveland area. Skews young, with 85 percent of employees

at least 300 jobs in the building for five years.

Separately, the city has approved a grant of up to \$1 million for Rosetta, which would receive the money over five years based on bringing \$25 million in new payroll to the city.

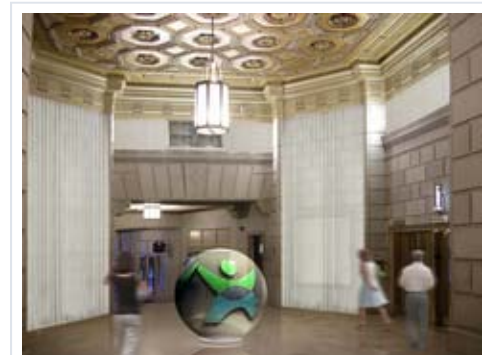
"This is the kind of company with the kind of employee that we exactly need for our kind of downtown" said Councilman Joe Cimperman, whose ward includes downtown. "They're young, they're creative, they're dynamic. And the magic word: They're growing."

Rosetta specializes in services including electronic marketing, social media, Web site design and market research. The agency's clients include Microsoft, OfficeMax, Marriott hotels, T-Mobile, Johnson & Johnson and handbag designer Coach. Founded in 1998, Rosetta entered the Cleveland market in 2008 by acquiring Brulant, a fast-growing digital marketing agency in Beachwood.

Last year, Rosetta's revenues reached \$150 million. The privately held company employs about 715 people in locations including Boston, New York, Chicago and Denver. The agency's largest hub is Cleveland, where 227 employees work in Beachwood, in overflowing offices on Park East Drive, and 129 employees are housed in Independence, on Rockside Road. The company also has been leasing space on Chagrin Boulevard.

As the economy soured and the company's growth eased off -- Brulant's revenues had jumped from \$8.2 million in 2003 to \$70.3 million in 2008 -- executives took advantage of the slowdown and began looking for a new home.

The agency plumbed the suburbs and visited nearly every building in downtown Cleveland. During the past year, Rosetta has been linked to properties including the vacant Ameritrust complex, the Tower at Erieview and the Plain Dealer's office building on Superior Avenue. Eventually, Rosetta focused on 629 Euclid Ave., the 1920s expansion of a building that houses the Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites, across from East Fourth Street.



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This rendering shows what a Rosetta display might look like in the lobby of the building at 629 Euclid Ave. in downtown Cleveland. Rosetta would occupy floors 11 to 15, plus a new, 17th-floor penthouse. The agency's new offices would be across Euclid Avenue from the East Fourth Street entertainment district.



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Rosetta is signing a 10-year-lease for 80,000 square feet at the former National City building at 629 Euclid Ave. in downtown Cleveland. The building will be renamed -- possibly as the Rosetta Center -- and will feature signs with the company's name and logo. This rendering shows the potential Rosetta signage and gives a glimpse of the penthouse Rosetta hopes to build on top of the 16-story building.

"Most of our staff are under the age of 40," said co-founder and president Kurt Holstein. "We're hiring college graduates who are interested in a dynamic, urban environment, which Cleveland offers, particularly in the East Fourth Street area that we're relocating to. The Marons have done a fantastic job creating a vibrant area."

Rosetta will gut the 11th to 15th floors of the 16-story building, turning them into modern, open offices where employees can collaborate. Above the 16th floor, which is used for mechanical systems, Rosetta envisions a penthouse with glass walls that provide expansive views of downtown Cleveland and Lake Erie. Plans for the penthouse level show conference rooms, a training room, a cafe and a rooftop patio with a putting green.

The building will be renamed -- possibly as the Rosetta Center -- and the company's name and logo will be featured prominently on the outside. The Holiday Inn, which is undergoing an update, could feature Rosetta signs out front and in the lobby.

Developer Ari Maron estimated that the Rosetta renovations will cost about \$5 million. Cleveland Development Advisors, an affiliate of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, is providing a loan of up to \$1 million to help finance the project.

The space most recently was occupied by National City Corp., whose lease on 140,000 square feet of the 210,000-square-foot building ended Dec. 31. PNC Financial Services Group Inc., which acquired National City in 2008, did not renew the lease. PNC spokesman Fred Solomon would not comment on what happened to employees who worked in the building, though the company has been eliminating jobs since the acquisition.

"Obviously, being able to reposition the building this way gives it a new life," Maron said. "I think it's huge for Euclid Avenue. You're talking about an internationally recognized company that is staking claim to a part of lower Euclid. They bring a lot of creativity. They bring 400 highly skilled, creative people that understand downtowns and understand how cities work. It's really hard to overstate the importance of that."

Rosetta's offices will sit across Euclid from the new home of Wyse, an advertising agency that recently moved 85 employees into a renovated department store building at 668 Euclid Ave. Maron hopes to attract other marketing and tech-focused companies to the block, which he described as Cleveland's new "Mad Men" district -- a reference to the hit television show about Madison Avenue advertising in 1960s New York.

City officials have been marketing Cleveland as a haven for high-tech companies with young employees who are interested in working and potentially living in an urban environment. Economic Development Director Tracey Nichols stressed that the city did not approach Rosetta about moving downtown from the suburbs. But she anticipates that Rosetta will help attract other companies, from outside Cuyahoga County, in addition to bringing new patrons to downtown restaurants and new residents to apartments and condos.

"Rosetta is a company that recognizes that downtown Cleveland is an urban center that can help them with attracting and retaining highly skilled arts and technology employees," Mayor Frank Jackson said in a written statement this afternoon. "This creative class of workers are looking for a quality of life that in this case is unique to Cleveland."

Some smaller companies already are eyeing the 100,000-or-so square feet available in Rosetta's future building, said Terry Coyne, a Grubb & Ellis real estate broker who represented the agency and is now marketing 629 Euclid.



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Rosetta plans to gut the floors of the 1920s office building, which has housed tenants including a law firm and, most recently, National City. The agency plans to build

For all these companies, East Fourth Street is a major draw. Rosetta, for example, is a social company whose employees work hard and play hard. And the company frequently entertains out-of-town clients and business prospects, who will now have a rooftop view of the city and a short walk to some of the city's best restaurants, Quicken Loans Arena and Progressive Field.

"There's a critical mass growing, in terms of young companies -- high-growth, sexy, innovative companies," said Brad Wertz, a Rosetta president and Ohio native. "We're a different company from the perception of manufacturing and distribution that's the image of Cleveland today. Cleveland can show that it is producing these new types of companies."

"We think the city of Cleveland can have a growth cycle and a migration similar to us as a company."

modern, open office space, as shown in this rendering. The company has outgrown its offices in Beachwood and Independence and wanted to unite its employees, and make room for more hires, in a location that is walking distance from restaurants, sporting events and downtown apartments and condominiums.

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