

Ten Best DTC Ads of 2014

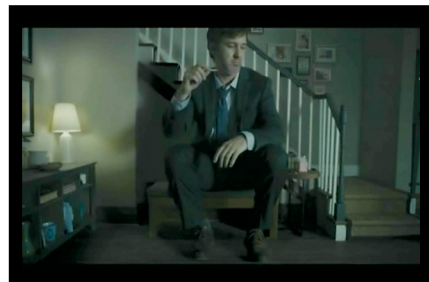
“To be honest, it was tough to come up with 10.” That’s how **Mary Skoyles**, president and director of media at Medical Media Services Inc. (MMSI), summarized the challenge of looking back over the last year of DTC ad campaigns and identifying her 10 best. Nonetheless, Skoyles—who’s been planning media for the pharma business for more than 35 years, for entities like Lowe McAdams and Forest Laboratories—was up to the task. Here she weighs in on the great, the good and everything in between.



BREO ELLIPTA

GlaxoSmithKline

The ad does a very effective job at connecting the brand name to the disease state: “Hello, my name is Katie. I have COPD. I use Breo.” They’re all four-letter words and they all sound right together; the rhythm is right on target. I love the simplicity, but at the same time I remembered the name of the product after I saw the ad just once. That doesn’t happen too often, in pharma or outside it.



TAMIFLU

Genentech

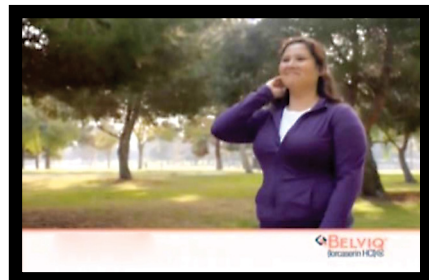
This one’s unique in that it does a wonderful job of conveying the gravity of catching the flu. It gets across the urgency of seeing a doctor right away, but it also frames the need in terms of a relatable image. The person’s head is so swollen that she can’t fit into the doctor’s office. Don’t you feel that way when you get the flu? I do.



ABILIFY

Otsuka

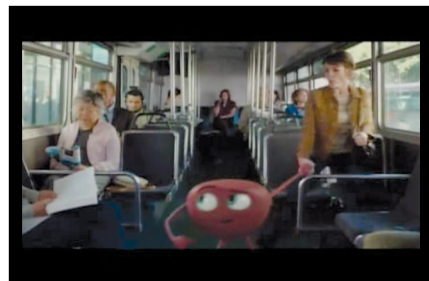
It delivers a very calming message in a pleasant way. It also feels more positive than what we see in the antidepressant space; it doesn’t dwell on the negativity and it doesn’t over-promise. It makes a good case for adding Abilify to your current antidepressant and seeing results in one or two weeks. The prospect of success in short order for such a debilitating illness? That’s a good message.



BELVIQ

Eisai

The ad offers a realistic solution to handling hunger and fighting obesity. Usually you get “all the weight will just drop off and you’ll fit back into that little black dress,” but here the messaging is much more grounded. It speaks about the risks of being overweight but doesn’t beat that point to death. It doesn’t make any big promises. It just says, “This may help.” Patients want to be treated in that kind of straightforward way.



MYRBETRIQ

Astellas

I love this. You have this lady on the bus with this overactive bladder that’s depicted as kind of a little monster, which forces her off the bus. Then she’s on a line—maybe for the movies?—and the same thing happens. The animated monster character really drives the messaging. It’s clever and it gets the point across in a really smart way.



CELEBREX

Pfizer

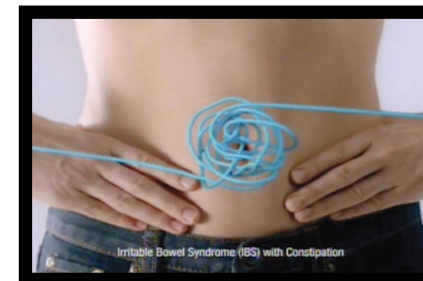
There are a few reasons why I noticed this ad. It’s simplistic and elegant in its nature—the visual of the older couple dancing. But it’s interesting how the ad mentions the cardiovascular risks right up front. Maybe they have to, given the history, but that’s still a bold choice. I’m not sure I agree. My guess is that if you’re on Celebrex or you’re thinking about going on it, you’ve done your googling and you know the score.



SPIRIVA

Boehringer Ingelheim

Everybody remembers this one: “Oh, it’s the elephant on the person’s chest.” That’s a lasting visual image of what COPD patients live with, that feeling of having this constant weight to bear. I like the creative use of the elephant prop. I like that they show the elephant following the patient around after she’s been treated—it’s a reminder that COPD isn’t something that leaves you overnight.



LINZESS

Forest/Ironwood

Full disclosure: A few years ago I worked on the professional campaign for Linzess. One of the things I like in consumer campaigns is when they have some kind of link to the professional one. Here, there’s a simple visual: that blue line that is knotted up. That’s similar enough to what was in the professional campaign that a person who can’t remember the product name can describe what he saw and the doctor should be able to piece it together.



EPIPEN AND EPIPEN JR.

Mylan

The ad itself is okay, but what makes it work is the way it speaks to the importance of visiting the website and understanding how to use the product—when to get rid of it, etc. The how-to on the site is very high level. That’s the real revelation and point of differentiation here.



NAMENDA

Forest

What a great tagline. “I am ...” their advocate, their voice, their caregiver. For Alzheimer’s, nobody has really figured out how to speak to the caretakers in a way that’s sensitive and acknowledges their burden. There’s a consistency and continuity here, in terms of tone and image, that’s striking.

Reels courtesy of Competitrack