

**100  
AGENCIES**



**AT THE HELM**

Steven Michaelson,  
CEO

**PERFORMANCE**

Revenues of around  
\$10 million

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Added as clients  
Novartis, Siemens,  
Boston Biomedical and  
Vigilant Biosciences

Special project for  
Vigilant: the OncAlert  
Oral Cancer Risk  
Assessment System

**CHALLENGES**

Continuing to develop  
its expertise

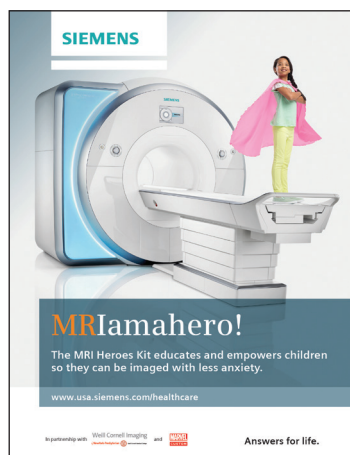
For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A to Z, beginning on page 183

**“THE GOAL IS TO BRING TO OUR CLIENTS WHAT WILL BENEFIT THEIR PRODUCTS THE MOST. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE A GOOD IDEA COMES FROM AS LONG AS YOU BRING THEM A GOOD IDEA.”**

—STEVEN MICHAELSON

## CALCIUM

From a tripartite merger arises a unique independent agency



Anyone who's been involved in the merger of two, let alone three, companies will tell you that it's not an easy thing to pull off. “You have all the dreams and aspirations of what it could be but then getting there is a little more difficult,” acknowledges Steven Michaelson, CEO of Calcium, the agency born from Star Group's January 2014 integration of Vox Medica and Calcium NYC with its own Star Life Science.

However, Michaelson believes the teething has been well worth it. “What we have created here is a unique shop,” he says. “We are an independent agency that is small and nimble enough yet has all the capabilities of any large network agency. It's pretty exciting.”

Michaelson believes the magic lies in the combination of Star Life Science's cutting-edge digital capabilities, Vox Medica's “really rich, really thick” science and the original Calcium NYC's reputation for strategy and creative. These areas of deep expertise blend to provide “brand nourishment” for clients—but without the “big-network bureaucracy.”

“It's that sweet spot where when you walk in and you say this is your pitch team,” he says. “And the senior management team that's there is going to be the team that's going to work your business. It's true and they know it.”

And it's a pitch that is beginning to bear fruit. With revenues in the region of \$10 million, the

65-person agency reports some significant wins over the past year, including Novartis, Siemens, Boston Biomedical and Vigilant Biosciences.

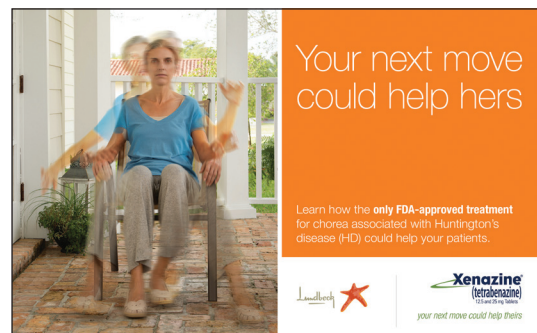
For the latter, Calcium is working on the OncAlert Oral Cancer Risk Assessment System, a product that, by measuring biomarkers in saliva, is able to detect oral cancer much earlier than by testing lesions in the mouth—and, thus, increasing patients' chances of survival. “It's pretty cool,” beams Michaelson.

The agency has also forged a number of beneficial partnerships with outside companies: Google and comScore, to strengthen its expertise in digital media and analytics, and Boston Healthcare, to gain a better understanding of payer communications, market access and reimbursement issues. “The goal is to bring to our clients what will benefit their products the most,” says Michaelson. “It doesn't matter where a good idea comes from, as long as you bring them a good idea.”

Calcium is headed by a leadership quartet: Working alongside Michaelson are chief operating officer Tim Garde, chief strategic officer Judy Capano and chief creative officer Steve Hamburg. (Former president Lorna Weir recently left the organization.)

Others that Michaelson cites as key players include Karen Decker, EVP, director of client services, and Kevin Dunn, EVP, strategy, whom the agency recently hired from Harte-Hanks.

Headquartered in Philadelphia with an office in New York, Calcium just opened a third location in San Francisco, giving it a West Coast presence. Garth McCallum, who used to be Michaelson's client back in the days of the Wishbone agency (and who most recently headed the West Coast office of AgencyRx), runs the office.



Calcium made MRI scans fun for kids and Siemens (above left) and emotionalized the HCP's impact for Xenazine (above)

As for the future, Michaelson says Calcium will continue to develop its expertise and its offerings. “We want to focus on the things that are critical to brand nourishment and business growth,” he says. “Big, powerful, dialogue-expanding ideas that activate because they resonate, ideas that move the needle because they move the audience. Even in this age, the power of a great idea cannot be underestimated.”

—James Chase