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AGENCIES



AT THE HELM

Jeff Farina, managing partner, and Greg Lewis, EVP and managing partner

PERFORMANCE

Led high-science campaigns for Pfizer, Novartis Oncology and Celgene

HIGHLIGHTS

Changed name to reflect affiliation with Grey

Brought in Colleen Zester as client services director

CHALLENGES

Naming a new creative director

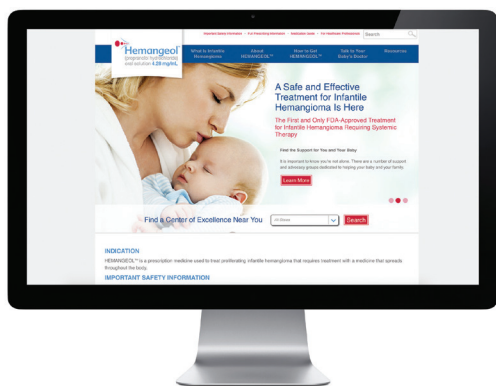
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“BY SIMPLIFYING [DATA] AND MAKING IT APPROACHABLE, ACTIONABLE AND ICONIC, WE TURN HEADS.”

—GREG LEWIS

**GHG
SUMMIT**

Internal challenges fueled innovation across the board for this New Jersey firm



Before he is ready to discuss the affairs of his agency, Greg Lewis, EVP, managing partner, wants to know if his receptionist answered the call correctly. “Did she say the right name?” he asks. “I put a sticky note next to her phone.” And that, in a nutshell, is the story of ghg summit: an agency that has changed beyond recognition yet hardly changed at all. (For the record, her execution was flawless.)

After years of window-shopping, ghg finally acquired the Vogel Farina agency in November, renaming it ghg summit on the final day of the year. Described by group CEO Lynn O’Connor Vos as a “strategic powerhouse,” the Summit, NJ-based shop boasts a pedigree in high-science specialty products, especially oncology and hematology, with 11 core clients including Pfizer, Novartis Oncology, Celgene and Shionogi.

Co-founder Bob Vogel left at the time of the acquisition so Lewis, a WPP veteran, was elevated to partner with Jeff Farina. Lewis, in turn, brought in a new client services director, Colleen Zester, from CDM. He will soon name a creative director.

“My mission, in part, was to calm any nerves about the transition,” explains Lewis. “People knew and loved [this agency], so my intent is to ensure that we embrace the opportunity of ghg and the net-

work, but without losing the culture and heritage.”

Renowned for clever headlines, ghg wasted little time in creating a tagline for summit’s specialty health mission: Communications that Turn Heads and Change Hearts. “A lot of our products are high-science, clinical-based products, and sometimes you can get lost in the data,” explains Lewis. “By simplifying it and making it approachable, actionable and iconic, we turn heads. Our marketing is compelling enough to develop relationships with customers and, thus, change hearts.”

The agency/client relationship doesn’t always come without challenges. “There is so much transition in the industry that everyone wants an immediate solution, but it can take a little bit of time to develop,” Lewis continues. “Sometimes by taking a step back, you can produce something else that will have a greater impact.”

Lewis is encouraged by the fact that some of the bigger companies, like Pfizer, are ready to loosen their grip on the holding-company model: “Where marketers are empowered to make their own decisions, with less pressure from procurement, the relationships feel stronger and more authentic.” He believes ghg summit benefits from competing both as a small agile shop for clients that want a consultative relationship and as part of an integrated network for clients that demand a big infrastructure.

Lewis sees increasing pressure on brands to demonstrate value and engage patients. “It’s not



Ad work from ghg summit for Pierre Fabre’s Hemangeol (above left) and Greer Allergy Immunotherapy (above)

only about the data and the efficacy, but also some of the less tangible elements, such as the experience and the support.”

Client reaction to the transition has been positive. “After all, we are the same people and much of the talent and the mind-set has remained. It’s just the outer branding and clothing we wear that looks a little different.” The receptionist won’t need that sticky reminder for much longer.

—James Chase