

100
AGENCIES



AT THE HELM

Ty Curran, Chairman and CEO

PERFORMANCE

Continued to thrive within surging specialty sector

HIGHLIGHTS

Added work from existing clients Bayer, Teva, Novartis and Genentech)

Added work from new clients Gilead, Valenat, Eisai and Merck

Promoted Mario Muredda to co-president (alongside Mardene Miller)

Hired Ane Jones to head up H&S's London office

CHALLENGES

Not losing focus on core business vision and history

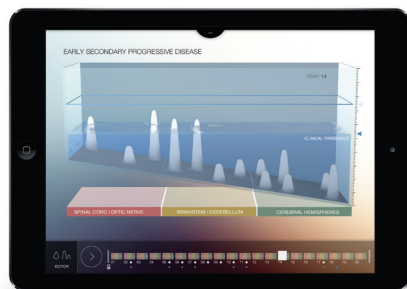
For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A to Z, beginning on page 183

“IF YOU FOCUS ON WHAT YOU HAVE, NEW BUSINESS WILL COME YOUR WAY.”

—TY CURRAN

HARRISON AND STAR

Looking at pharma from the inside out



Ordinarily, when an agency higher-up answers a question with a response like “we’re not going to do anything different from what we’re doing,” it’s an excuse for the reporter who asked it to launch into a righteous self-aggrandizing tirade. What do you mean, not do anything different? What about the ACA? What about the payers? Healthcare is changing, you know!

But when the higher-up in question is Harrison and Star chairman and CEO Ty Curran, no such second-guessing is warranted. Among agencies of a certain size, H&S has perhaps the most sharply defined mission and positioning: It’s a specialty agency, it’s always been a specialty agency and, barring some colossal shift in the marketplace, it will always be a specialty agency. Given those aforementioned changes in healthcare, that’s an okay place to be.

Told how many other agencies now identify themselves as experts in this space, Curran laughs—and then, in so many words, dismisses the would-be competition. “It’s nice that every agency is trying to say that they’re a specialty agency, but we’ve pretty much owned that space for the past 15 years,” he explains. “We’ve stayed true to our specialty DNA. We’re not going to change our strategy, vision or mission in response to what somebody else is doing.”

The year 2014, then, goes down in the books as both an exceptional year for H&S and, well, business as usual. The agency added work from both

existing (Bayer, Teva, Novartis, Genentech) and new (Gilead, Valeant, Eisai, Merck) clients. It did so, according to Curran, without devoting extensive energy to new-business cultivation.

“It goes back to what our founders Larry Star and Tom Harrison always said: You can get lost in this industry chasing new business,” Curran notes. “If you focus on what you have, new business will come your way.”

That client focus, increasingly, has prompted H&S to pay additional attention to payer communications. “It used to be something you weren’t all that concerned about, but over the past 10 years that’s become a significant component of what we do,” Curran says. “With the cost of molecules so high, you need to understand the impact of that cost on the entire healthcare system.”

If H&S made other tweaks to its modus operandi in 2014, Curran doesn’t deem them worthy of mention. He does, however, go out of his way to talk up H&S talent old and new, in a manner that suggests an affinity and gratitude that goes beyond mere rote professional appreciation.

He starts at the top, heralding the elevation of nearly four-year H&S veteran Mario Muredda to co-president alongside Mardene Miller. “Because of the growth we’ve had, the job got too big for one person to handle,” Curran says. He then talks a personnel swap of sorts with Omnicom Medical Specialist Communications Group sibling Biolumina Group, whose president Ane Jones will now helm H&S’s growing London office; former London chief Kirsten Kantak will head back to the



H&S specialties: a topographical model of MS (above left) and letting physicians bite back against snakebite (above)

States to assume the Biolumina presidency.

He gets most animated, however, when discussing the H&S trio of EVP, COO and CFO Charles Doomany; SVP, Director of Human Resources Robert Gemignani; and SVP, Director of Agency Excellence Bill Major. “They understand this business in a way people in those roles usually don’t and they have incredible hearts. We’d be nowhere without them. Put that in the story, okay?”

—Larry Dobrow