AT THE HELM
Clockwise, from top left: Peter Korian, president and founder; Marc Porter, managing director, healthcare; John Leone, SVP, strategy and analytics; and Brady Walcott, SVP, marketing and development

PERFORMANCE
Revenues were up only marginally over the prior year's

HIGHLIGHTS
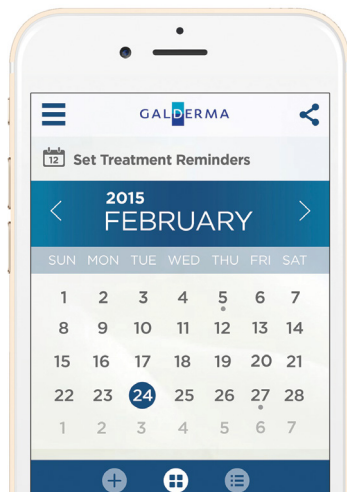Grew its client roster to include Janssen Biotech, Galderma and Biogen

CHALLENGES
Continuing to innovate on a high level

> **IF YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR CLIENTS, YOU UNDERSTAND THE PRESSURES THEY FACE."**
> —MARC PORTER

IOMEDIA

This digital firm has made the fully realized leap from 2-D to 3-D

Here's the thing about the annual agency-issue call with the folks at IOMEDIA: If you're even the slightest bit interested in the way our economic, cultural and organizational infrastructures are being razed and reconstructed in the digital era, you can easily drift away from the topic at hand—you know, what's-it-called, the pharma-marketing thing. The reason for this is that, to phrase it super-elegantly, IOMEDIA does a whole lot of cool stuff.

Like the company's "virtual venues," devised to tech-nify ticketing processes for any number of sports teams and leagues. Over the past year or so, IOMEDIA has made the jump from 2-D to 3-D, even creating an Oculus Rift platform for use in courting high-end customers and season-ticket buyers. "You can move around the field, the clubhouses, the parking lot, you name it," says managing director, healthcare Marc Porter.

He then draws a parallel between IOMEDIA's work outside healthcare and within it—which returns the reporter's focus to its proper place. "At the end of the day, everything we do is about the user experience," he continues. "If you start with end users—whether it's a patient or a caregiver or a doctor or a fan—and enhance their experience, their interaction with your client will be enhanced."

Given the premium so many healthcare orga-

nizations are placing on digital experiences, it's no wonder that IOMEDIA has grown its client roster to include heavy hitters like Janssen Biotech, Galderma and Biogen over the past year. Still, SVP, strategy and analytics John Leone throws cold water on the notion that the business is finally on board with customer-centricism. "People sometimes forget that UX isn't new. It's existed since we've been laying out newspapers," he explains.

Porter agrees, adding that the pharma industry may be getting a bad rap for something over which it has little control. "Caution and trepidation is not without merit. In many cases, there's a good reason for the slowness—these organizations are not selling soft drinks or shoes," he says. "If you understand your clients, you understand the pressures they face. In many cases, it's a lack of clarity on how to operate within constraints that have always existed."

IOMEDIA's approach, then, is one that eschews quick fixes in favor of ones likely to have short- and long-term impact. Its executives don't pack their sentences with buzzwords and its strategists and tacticians don't fall for the novelty of this week's next big thing. Heck, the agency can't even be bothered to comically overstate its recent performance.

"We're about where we were in head count [around 175]. Last year we were up a little [in revenue]. This year we'll probably be flat," Porter reports. "But we're quite happy with flat this year. Trying to grow and innovate is a challenge. In that scenario, you worry about quality."

Asked about "impact" hires, Porter similarly

Above left: IOMEDIA's patient app for Galderma features reminders. Above: Exploded views of the Restylane app

downplays it. "I'd argue we're a culture of 'none of us is more important than all of us,'" he continues. SVP, marketing and development Brady Walcott then chimes in: "A good idea can come from anywhere—and frankly, it's expected to."

This attitude stems from IOMEDIA's heritage as a tech company. "It's okay if something hasn't been done before," Porter says. "What we like are people who say, 'Let's figure out the right path and then we'll figure out how to get past the barriers.'"
—*Larry Dobrow*