



AT THE HELM
Craig Sullivan,
president

PERFORMANCE
Grew agency revenue
by nearly 14% to
\$65.9 million

HIGHLIGHTS
Added brands including
Aczone, Botox Cos-
metic, Botox Chronic
Migraine, Botox OAB,
Combigan, Juvéderm,
Juvéderm Voluma,
Lumigan Natrelle,
Ozrudex, Restasis,
SkinMedica and
Tazorac

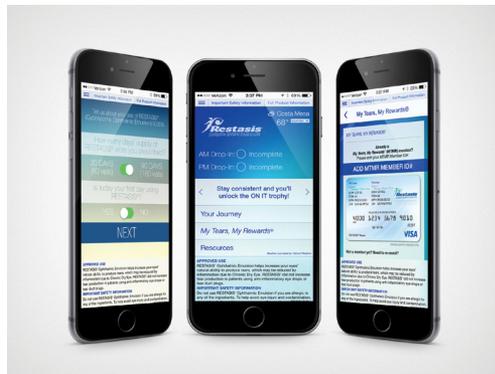
Also did work for
Thoratec and Bausch
& Lomb

CHALLENGES
Setting up an East
Coast outpost

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

PACIFIC COMMUNICATIONS

Keeping steady amid the storms



Talking about simultaneously juggling a host of most of tasks is one thing. Being caught up in a take-over fight and attempting to conduct business as usual—right around the time you’ve been promoted to lead a company—is something else entirely.

It would seem, then, that Pacific Communications president Craig Sullivan would have a lot to discuss, and not much time to discuss it. When asked about this, he responds that 2014 was “a year of transition.” That probably understates the case a bit, especially given the takeover fight between the firm’s then-parent Allergan and now-parent Actavis. That duel, which played out in the headlines throughout 2014, came with the distinct possibility that Actavis might choose to shutter the in-house shop.

Ultimately, those fears were unfounded. While Pacific’s head count dipped in 2014 (to 214 employees, from the 257 it reported in May 2014), Sullivan says the number has rebounded to around 250. Too, despite the corporate sparring, agency revenue jumped 13.9% in 2014, to \$65.9 million. The firm kept and won assignments for brands including Aczone, Botox Cosmetic, Botox Chronic Migraine, Botox OAB, Combigan, Juvéderm, Juvéderm Voluma, Thoratec and Bausch & Lomb.

Pacific’s status as the in-house agency doesn’t mean that Allergan simply handed over all its

brands and called it an afternoon. Rather, Sullivan says the firm pitched and grew its Allergan portfolio “just like any other agency would.” He also notes that the competition has changed: Pacific has been fending off its traditional big-agency rivals as well as smaller digital shops seeking to win business on a project-by-project basis.

One of Pacific’s key strengths is its ability to partner well with others, an attribute Sullivan says is essential now that clients are increasingly spreading accounts across agencies. One trend he has noticed in recent months: AOR assignments are becoming more defined, which means that more agency partners may find themselves working together on a single brand. “You’ll find AOR not just on a per-brand basis, but for each component of the brand: an AOR for DTC, for professional, for digital,” he reports.

Part of what kept Pacific grounded and its clients engaged, even amid the background takeover noise, is that Sullivan made it a point to preserve the legacy of “brand stewardship” established by his predecessor, Ryan Abbate. After all, Sullivan had worked with Abbate since joining the agency 11 years ago. At the same time, Sullivan wasn’t exactly shy about shaking things up. He broadened Pacific’s slate of managerial talent largely by promoting from within. Changes included the promotions of Henry Lee, Ryan Orsini and Kun-Yang Kim to directors of client services and new roles for Peter Siegel (executive creative director), Joseph Abiad (director of finance and agency operations), James Marlin (executive director of agency services) and Pat Macke (director of interactive services).



Above left: Pacific created these patient apps for Restasis. Above: Physician-directed print materials reminding them that Botox can help prevent chronic migraines

As for Sullivan’s perspective on the Allergan/Actavis whirlwind, he believes his agency was able to endure the uncertainty by doing what it does best: delivering value to its clients.

Sullivan says that his near-term goals include winning some new Actavis business and attempting to expand its non-Allergan-focused relationships. Additionally, look for Pacific to explore the possibility of opening up an office on the East Coast.

—Deborah Weinstein

“YOU’LL FIND AOR NOT JUST PER BRAND BUT FOR [EACH] COMPONENT OF THE BRAND: AOR FOR DTC, FOR PROFESSIONAL, FOR DIGITAL.”

—CRAIG SULLIVAN