



AT THE HELM

Larry Iaquinto, principal and brand strategist, and Sheila Gerus, principal and brand strategist

PERFORMANCE

Revenues up 6% to 7% over the previous year's

HIGHLIGHTS

Added Merial, Sanofi's veterinary division, and Jubilant DraxImage

Hired Joe Vitale as creative directory/copy and Charles Jeffries as creative director/art

CHALLENGES

Managing continuing expansion

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

RENAVATIO HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATIONS

Daredevil depth-defying devotion

As in previous years, working on drugs in development is still a big chunk of the business at Renavatio, according to principal and brand strategist Sheila Gerus. "We have a lot of expertise in prelaunch phases," says Gerus. "We know how to help our clients be forward-thinking in terms of claims and product profiles." And yes, the firm knows that it's risky to rely on prelaunch business but, Gerus adds, "We try to balance the risk by also taking on drugs already on the market."

The direction chosen by Gerus and partner Larry Iaquinto seems to be working: Renavatio continues to grow, with a head count nearing 35 and revenues in 2014 up 6% to 7% over 2013. The agency's newer clients range far and wide: One is Merial, the veterinary division of Sanofi, which is launching a dog chew meant to treat serious bad breath.

Another is Jubilant DraxImage, a company that develops and manufactures radiopharmaceutical products for diagnostic imaging such as PET scans. Based in Montreal (it may be no coincidence that Gerus earned her MBA at Montreal's McGill University), Jubilant already has a presence in two dozen countries around the world. Renavatio's job

is to help it expand to the US market.

Two more new clients are PDI, which makes wipes and other disinfectant agents to control the spread of infection in hospitals, and CareDx, which is developing a noninvasive diagnostic to help predict the risk of rejection in kidney transplant patients. Renavatio has also worked on Novocure's Optune, which was recently approved for the treatment of recurrent glioblastoma.

Gerus reports that Renavatio's business is about 30% digital. However, while she acknowledges that digital is becoming ubiquitous with every brand, she sees a strong role for traditional communications: "We're focused on driving adoption, but not just through any one channel." The sales force, of course, still plays a big part in spreading the word about specialty products and areas involving new technology ("the reps help educate and are more involved in the uptake process"). While access to physicians is generally getting tougher all the time, that's less of a problem with the specialty products in their area of expertise.

Gerus is optimistic about the future, noting that things are opening up. "We're seeing good opportunities for independent agencies geared to certain customer needs," she explains. "For example, new technologies looking for agencies to partner with." Those customers "who want something different" will find a wide range of capabilities at Renavatio, Gerus adds. "We have quite a few PhDs, including scientists who have worked different roles both in and out of pharma. We really understand how the

buying process takes place and we can offer our customers a wide range of skill sets along the journey."

New staff members in the past year reflect Renavatio's practice of hiring seasoned pros. Additions include Joe Vitale, creative director/copy (most recently freelance; he's worked with a lot of agencies) and Charles Jeffries, the new creative director/art (who came from Dudnyk and, says Gerus, brings a tremendous amount of creative experience, from both pharma and non-pharma).

Renavatio will continue to expand, Gerus predicts, and dive deeper into the digital space. Too,

she's excited about a new alliance with Baldwin & Obenauf, an agency in Bridgewater, NJ, that she says has great video capabilities, such as 3-D product animation. What cool project are they collaborating on? Gerus declines to say but suggests we stay tuned.

—Barbara Peck



Self-promotional ad from Renavatio designed to show that it defies depths to determine what matters

“WE’RE SEEING GOOD OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDEPENDENT AGENCIES GEARED TO CERTAIN CUSTOMER NEEDS—FOR EXAMPLE, NEW TECHNOLOGIES LOOKING FOR AGENCIES TO PARTNER WITH.”

—SHEILA GERUS