



AT THE HELM

Jon Sawyer, principal;
David Ormesher, CEO;
and Tom Riley, principal

PERFORMANCE

Revenue down to \$7.1 million from \$7.5 million

HIGHLIGHTS

Landed 20 wins, including expanded work with Novo Nordisk diabetes initiatives

Invested in data mining capabilities

Fourth eDetail program added from Takeda

Headcount up 7 with no layoffs

CHALLENGE

Overcoming issues with healthcare reform

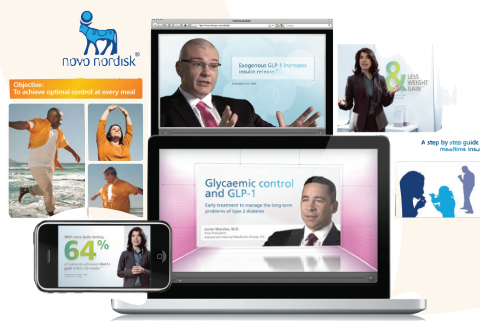
For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 173

“It’s been an interesting year of transition. Innovation is going to be our way out”

—David Ormesher

closerlook

Narrowed healthcare focus helped mostly interactive firm land 20 wins



CEO David Ormesher says it was a year of transition and innovation for Chicago-based closerlook, which narrowed its focus from general marketing to healthcare in 2008. Revenue was basically flat—down slightly to \$7.1 million from \$7.5 million in 2008.

“We added clients, but we didn’t see a pop on the top line because a lot of legacy clients put projects on hold,” Ormesher explains. “That drove us to be more aggressive on new client acquisition. We strengthened our base...and existing clients are now reinvesting while new clients are growing. We’re up about 20% compared to this time last year.”

Ormesher thinks the combination of healthcare reform and the recession caused some clients to freeze early in the year. By Q4 he says they were ready to look at finding ways to innovate.

“Our strategy was to whiteboard for clients what’s going to change and what’s not going to change,” he says. “Regardless of what happens with healthcare reform, clients still need strong relationships with healthcare professionals and patients.”

About 60% of business is interactive, and closerlook landed 20 wins last year. Work with Novo Nordisk diabetes initiatives expanded to include global eDetailing work for Levemir, NovoMix and Victoza; and FlexPen was won this year. A fourth eDetail program was awarded last year from Takeda Pharmaceuticals

(Amitiza, which launched February 2010), and a fifth is in the works. The agency also developed and launched strategic positioning, messaging, and a new corporate website for Healthy Interactions, a company that uses “Conversation Map” programs to facilitate engagement between a variety of stakeholders including doctors, patients, pharma companies, and insurance companies.

Headcount was up seven from 2008 to 44 with no layoffs. A new Philadelphia office opened last June to service East Coast clients. One person staffs the office currently, and there are expansion plans this year.

Ormesher notes increasing alliance and crossover between pharma and health insurance clients—particularly around patient communities, wellness, and behavioral change. He expects increased client investment in these areas, as he sees a “renewed interest” in companies wanting to address chronic health epidemics, such as diabetes.

He sees “lines blurring between what’s healthcare and what’s not,” and he believes pharma, insurance and large CPG companies will continue to converge. In 2008, Kraft hired closerlook to help its health and wellness group with strategy to communicate with healthcare pros and patients and develop communities around health and wellness.

“Kraft and Nestle have recognized they have a responsibility and a role to play,” he adds. “Healthcare reform will play out over the next 10 years, and it’s a great opportunity [for food companies] to reposition



Above: Different aspects of a campaign for Uloric; Top: A look at diabetes initiatives for Novo Nordisk

around that and be a leader. Some CPG companies at the highest levels are beginning to meet with their counterparts in traditional healthcare [to talk about] well-funded programs around some chronic disease states. We’re helping facilitate that.”

Last year the agency made a big investment in data mining capabilities (both internally and externally) to help clients better reach and understand physicians. Ormesher expects that practice as well as overall strategic work to continue to increase this year, as clients rely on agencies more than ever to help them navigate industry changes. “It’s been an interesting year of transition,” he adds. “Innovation is going to be our way out.” —Tanya Lewis