



AT THE HELM

Partners Walt Clarke and Scott Goudy

PERFORMANCE

Revenue increased 14% in 2009 to \$13.4 million

HIGHLIGHTS

Awarded seven new accounts, including promotional work for United Therapeutics and the launch of Salix's Metozolv ODT

Named Salix's AOR

Headcount rose from 56 in 2009 to 62. Notable hires include Joe Conwell, Michael Szumera, Todd Parker and Ed Leon

CHALLENGE

Staying on top of social media guidelines

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 171

“We’re obviously on top of the discussion around social media, and what our clients can say”

—Walt Clarke

MedThink Communications

Relatively new shop finds its footing with AOR work, product launches

In spite of a year marked by tumultuous economic instability and an ever-consolidating client base, Raleigh, NC-based MedThink Communications experienced constant growth, namely across digital services and medical communications, according to partner Walt Clarke.

What does MedThink consider its biggest achievement during the recession? “Making it through 2009,” quips Clarke. And, then, quick to cover his jest, he explains with sincerity: “We joke about that, but a lot of agencies in Raleigh went under in 2009.”

Though Clarke maintains agency business began at a slow pace last year, he reported revenue of \$13.4 million for 2009, and commented, “We actually ended the year up a little over \$1 million [a 14% increase] from the year before.”

Established in 2004, MedThink was awarded seven new accounts last year. It took on promotional business for United Therapeutics, including pulmonary arterial hypertension drugs Adcirca and Remodulin, in addition to supporting the launch of Salix's Metozolv ODT—indicated for diabetic gastroparesis and refractory GERD—in October 2009. The shop currently serves as AOR for Salix, working in the areas of promotional and medical communications programming.

Additional wins include new business with Shinogi Pharma (Clonidine HCL), Inspire Pharmaceuticals (Denufosol), and Abbott Laboratories (Zempler).

Coping with the developing needs of his business and the industry as a whole, Clarke notes that the evolution of digital sparked numerous new hires in MedThink's interactive division, which nearly doubled

in size during 2009. “I think our business has changed in the past 18 months, where maybe 24 months ago we really didn't have a digital capability, and now we've got probably close to 25 people in our digital group,” he explains.

The agency responded to the developing needs of the industry by increasing the number of upper-management staff. MedThink recently welcomed Joe Conwell, SVP, executive creative director, Michael Szumera, VP, public relations, Todd Parker, PhD, scientific director, and Ed Leon, account director, medical communications, to its core leadership team. The number of employees dropped from 59 in 2008 to 56 in 2009. However, 2010 has brought the number of employees up to 62, with 14 additional new hires slated so far for this year.

Forecasting the year ahead, Clarke expects business to increase steadily — “hopefully by 25-to-30%,” he says. In Q2 2010, MedThink will be launching a suite of custom business solutions, including MedThink Connect (an interactive tool and online community that enables a rapid exchange of information between companies and their customers), and MedThink Align (a hosted site that allows companies and external



A professional ad for Salix Pharmaceuticals' Metozolv ODT. MedThink handled the launch for the brand

partners to stay up-to-date on key activities) to help clients improve ongoing communications, strengthen relationships and optimize client engagement.

Clarke cites impending FDA regulations as foreseen challenges for 2010, especially concerning social media guidelines. “We’re obviously on top of the discussion around social media, and what our clients can say,” he attests. “But, without any kind of guidance, we can only steer our clients in a very conservative direction... They kind of look to us to stay current and make recommendations to them, then they take that into consideration and make the decisions.” — Lauren Folino