

# Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising

Record gains, 26 new assignments help firm overcome difficult economic year



**“We can never anticipate what’s going to launch and what’s not, but we can anticipate our clients’ needs”**

—Dave Marek

Life gave Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising lemons in 2009, and somehow the agency made a high-octane energy drink.

“If you looked at just revenue, anticipated versus where we landed, we probably lost the equivalent of a mid-sized agency,” says Dave Marek, EVP, managing director.

The New York-based Saatchi professional advertising shop, a healthcare marketing behemoth, nonetheless finished the year with record revenue gains, and won 26 new brand assignments.

While the agency didn’t lose any business for performance-related reasons, they lost a lot of business. Eloxatin, a big account, ceased promotion. Sanofi-Aventis sleep drug eplivanserin ran into an FDA buzz saw and has been put on hold, and the company’s benign prostatic hyperplasia drug Cetrorelix failed to perform in phase III clinical trials.

Other clients pulled way back on promotion or stopped promoting their brands altogether.

Marek says the agency was able to cope because it had prepared for the downturn and the eventual shift to digital.

“We can never anticipate what’s going to launch and what’s not, but we can certainly anticipate our clients’ needs,” says Marek. “The transition from traditional into not just digital but relationship marketing, from managing blockbusters to managing mid-sized brands or even project-based work, and how you have to work much more efficiently in that environment—we anticipated all those market changes years ago and we prepared for it.”

The shop benefited mightily from organic growth, Marek says, thanks to an up-to-date offering.

“We grew tremendously with our clients in terms of the type of work we’ve done with them, moving from very traditional to very digital/interactive/CRM work,” he says. “So, as budgets were winding down on one side they were growing on the other side within the same brands.”

Top clients AstraZeneca and Sanofi-Aventis gave the agency more business, as did Biogen Idec, Novo Nordisk and Novartis.

For Sanofi, Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising landed the professional assignment for the company’s oncology portfolio, adding Taxotere last year and then pipeline candidates aflibercept and BSI-201. The shop handled the launch of Sanofi leukemia treatment Oforta earlier this year. “Oncology is an area we look to shine in,” boasts Marek.

Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising also landed a big relationship marketing account with Pfizer across several established brands.

“Where we’ve excelled in the last year is getting the most out of brands that are in the later stages of their lifecycle,” says Marek, citing the agency’s work on Ambien CR and Nexium in particular.



**Above: A website launching Boehringer Ingelheim's Viramune; Top: Part of a journal ad for Nexium**

“We sat down with the Ambien CR team and looked at the strategy,” says Marek. “And instead of beating the physician customer over the head with clinical data that many of them already know, it was about shirting gears and saying that this is about access and getting Ambien CR to the appropriate patient. And it’s made a tremendous difference. That’s something the industry is looking for right now—how do we get the most out of the brands we already have? And that’s something that really differentiates us.”

Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising has had one big win in 2010—of a next-generation epinephrine pen for Sanofi that's launching shortly.

Around 30% of the shop's work is now in digital and relationship marketing. "We have brands that are pushing 60% and brands that are much less than that," says Marek, "but some of the largest brands are 40-plus percent digital work." Over the past several years, Marek says, Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising has added "digital strategists, channel planners, information architects, analytics, a lot of different skill sets."

During the past year, headcount has remained steady at a little over 200. The shop hired Cathy Mayone as EVP, chief strategic officer, after SVP, strategic planning, Alison Kane left. Mayone joined from McCann's MRM Worldwide—where she was SVP, director of strategic services—but spent over a decade doing



**Above: The brand.com site for healthcare professionals for Takeda Pharmaceuticals' Amitiza for CIC**

management consulting on CRM at Accenture.

"Her experience crosses Pepsi, Verizon, US Army," says Marek. "Very high-profile, engaging relationship marketing work in which she pulled together the strategic offering. So, we built around that model what we call our 'centers of excellence,' which puts that kind of strategic thinking aligned with the deepest level of therapeutic area experience, so the output is a really different way of looking at a brand."

Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising also promoted Jordan Levinson to management supervisor in charge of the agency's cardiovascular and GI brands.

One of the shop's proudest moments of 2009 was its work on behalf of Seroquel at the APA's annual meeting, where the shop built a "30-foot domed environment" featuring holographic images of patients and clinicians presenting data and personalizing the drug's impact.

"The line [for the Seroquel environment] was all the way out the door and down the hall," says Marek, "but even more amazing was hearing physicians say that this is how information should be presented going forward. That showed us it's not just about a sexy booth, it's about delivering information in a way that's more relevant to the audience and that sticks."



#### AT THE HELM

Dave Marek, EVP, managing director

#### PERFORMANCE

Finished the year with record revenue gains

#### HIGHLIGHTS

Added 26 new brand assignments, including work for AstraZeneca, Sanofi-Aventis, Biogen Idec, Novo Nordisk and Novartis

Won big account for Sanofi-Aventis' next-generation epinephrine pen that's launching soon

Created "30-foot domed environment" for Seroquel at the APA's annual meeting that featured holographic images of patients and clinicians presenting data

Held onto work for Enbrel even with Pfizer's acquisition of Wyeth

Headcount remained steady at about 200; notable hires Cathy Mayone, EVP, chief strategic officer, and Jordan Levinson joined the firm

#### CHALLENGES

Lost several accounts because of ceased promotion, FDA issues and other problems within clinical trials

Embracing low-cost outsourcing

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

Marek is also proud of the shop's recent work on mature brands including Ambien CR, Nexium and Enbrel, which agency was able to hold on to through Pfizer's acquisition of Wyeth.

"We've done some data visualization work on Enbrel that's really impressive and really helps to make the information that these brands are more meaningful to clinicians."

The agency's access to the global Publicis network and close relationship with consumer sibling Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness, have meant a portfolio heavy on big blockbusters.

"And when they swing, they're big swings," says Marek.

But those brands are few and far between these days. "What we prepared for was that they weren't all going to be blockbuster brands, so they require a



**Above: A professional ad for AstraZeneca's Seroquel XR, approved for an indication for bipolar depression**

very different skill set and a different way of working," says Marek.

Marek says the agency's superpower is the ability to see into the future.

"Our mission is to be ahead of the curve and lead the industry," says Marek. "We have strategic partnerships that help us see the future and where the world is going, and that's a big part of how we prepared for this economic environment and how we helped our clients prepare. We're very well positioned to capitalize on the changes happening in the industry. We do need a different approach, but we're already there. We've got the right people already in place. We're not building it now—we built it three years ago and we're fine-tuning its efficiency."

Marek laments: "We're helping our clients solve the issues in front of them, like: How do you get the most out of a current brand? and, How do you escalate the value of a brand initially at launch or how do you create better connectivity with customers? We've solved a lot of those and those are some of our greatest successes. The other challenge overlaid on that is how do you embrace low-cost outsourcing. We're not fighting that. Our clients want and deserve the most efficient delivery mechanism for their work."

—Matthew Arnold