AT THE HELM
Ned Russell, managing director

PERFORMANCE
"Meeting goals as directed by the company"

HIGHLIGHTS
Russell came on board as managing director, replacing Jim Joseph

Landed Durex account, including the launch of a new non-latex condom

Headcount remained steady at 125

Retained all business in the last 12 months

CHALLENGE
Dealing with the loss of drugs going off-patent

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

> ## "When we say 'wellness,' it's really about proactive health stuff"
> —Ned Russell

Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness

Consumer firm stays 'positive' with big brands, more proactive health work

The consumer arm of Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Advertising got new leadership and continued its efforts to expand into OTC and wellness brands in 2009. Jim Joseph left the agency to lead indie PR shop Lippe Taylor at the end of 2009. He was replaced by Ned Russell, who was previously head of client services at the Publicis shop; Russell had joined in June from Las Vegas Sands Corp., having previously worked on J&J brands at big consumer agencies including Arnold and DDB.

Russell says the agency has grown and "sort of found itself" over the past year, with more consumer-facing brands, a slew of awards and the launch of an annual survey of attitudes toward health and wellness in America. Aimed at establishing the firm's "thought leadership" in the consumer health and wellness space, the survey, "Wellness & the economy," aimed at getting into the heads of stressed-out consumers, and got good coverage in the trade and national press.

The shop has long been known for handling TV-and-print efforts on mega-blockbusters. Its current roster includes three of the top five best-selling drugs—Nexium, Plavix and Seroquel—along with Ambien CR, a top-10 advertiser. But, Plavix and Seroquel lose US patent protection next year, and Nexium in 2014. It won't hit too hard, though, says Russell. "These things tend to wind down over time, so it's not a real dramatic hit when they go off-patent," he says. "And we've been given assignments at the same time with those clients that are ramping up. So, there's a kind of natural watermark, and the trick is to raise that watermark carefully so you don't get to where there's huge rises and falls."

Long-term, the shop is working to reduce its reliance on huge drug brands. Over the past few years, with many of those blockbusters nearing the end of their patent lives, the agency has sought to diversify its business out of prescription drugs, with some success. Last year Wellness landed the US integrated marketing account for Durex, including the launch of the brand's new non-latex condom Bare. More recently, the shop picked up an assignment with Nestle.

"When we say 'wellness,' it's really about proactive health stuff," says Russell. "You talk about 'health' and people say, 'Already sick, take this.'" About a third of the agency's work is now in "wellness" brands, "and that's a good balance," says Russell. "We certainly don't want to lose our consumer DTC Rx cred."

The agency has also done a remarkable job of ramping up its digital and relationship marketing business, which now accounts for about two-thirds of its work, with general advertising down to a third of accounts.

Above: A consumer ad for Merial's Frontline Plus, a monthly treatment to stop the infestation of fleas

Russell expects that fully 80% of the shop's work will be in the digital/RM space by year's end.

Recent ads include a humorous Nexium print and TV effort answering Prevacid24HR and a striking effort on behalf of Seroquel XR for bipolar depression.

Revenue-wise, it was a positive year, though Russell is mum on the details, citing network policy and allowing only that the agency is "meeting our goals as directed by the company." Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness didn't lose any business last year, and headcount remained steady at around 125.

The firm's biggest client is Sanofi Aventis, for Multaq, Ambien CR and "a variety of oncology products."

—Matthew Arnold