



AT THE HELM

Michael Parks, EVP, public relations and marketing communications, and Lorna Weir, president

PERFORMANCE

Restructuring move “paid off” in 2009

HIGHLIGHTS

Brought in multiple client additions (with no losses), including AOR status for Dendreon’s Provenge and work for Nautilus Neurosciences

Continued work on Cephalon’s Nuvigil

Added new president Lorna Weir to the team

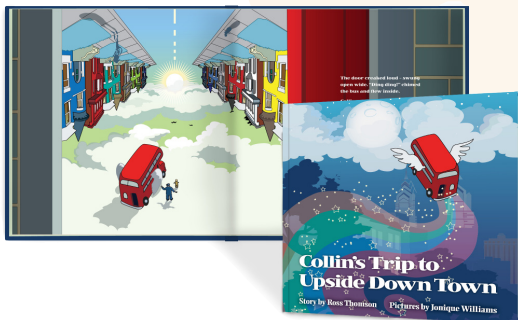
CHALLENGE

Pushing social media

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

Vox Medica

New business model wins over clients, brings in AOR and project work for firm



Vox Medica spent much of 2008 looking inward, engaging in what one executive called “a complete re-engineering” of its business model. In 2009, it hoped to reap the benefits of that transformation, which restructured Vox around its core competencies and practice areas.

To hear president Lorna Weir tell it, the move paid off. “What we saw in the second half of 2009 was an incredible entrenchment internally, which I believe was related to the uniqueness and approach of the model,” she says. “It felt like a transformational event.”

Weir arrived right in the middle of it, joining the firm in the first half of the year from medical advertising shop Dudnyk. She was able to view the changes at Vox, then, from a slightly different perspective, especially as they pertained to client and employee reactions. Both audiences, she says, were won over, though one faster than the other.

Both existing and prospective clients saw the new structure’s upside immediately.

“There was a little sense of ‘Wow, this agency does things differently,’” Weir notes.

Selling the changes internally took a bit more time—which isn’t a surprise, given the usual resistance to change in any corporate environment.

“I think people had to get their head around it,

because they were exposed to so much more,” she says. “But when they saw how it would work, it was very well received.”

Vox’s newly minted multidisciplinary approach paid off in the form of multiple client additions without a single loss.

Dendreon vested Vox with agency-of-record status for prostate cancer drug Provenge, which launched in the first half of 2010, while relative newcomer Nautilus Neurosciences tapped the firm for work on its Cambia migraine drug.

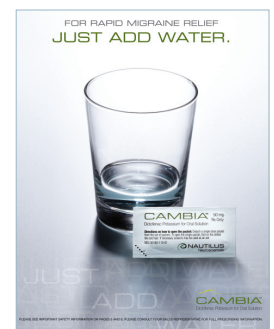
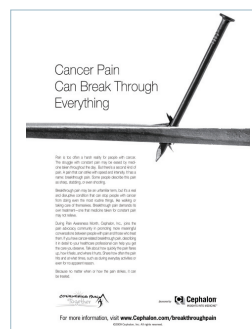
Vox continued with its media-relations push on behalf of Cephalon’s Nuvigil, while Labopharm hired it for public relations support in advance of an imminent product launch. Other new clients included industry group CAQH (for market access) and BTG International.

Weir believes the client and account wins were a direct outgrowth of the new multidisciplinary structure, especially in the way it affords clients the freedom to choose one of the firm’s offerings or all of them.

“They love the fact that even if the assignment is initially in one particular area, we can extend it to others,” Weir says. “We have the resident experts right here.”

Vox’s headcount sits right around where it was at this time last year, at about 100 staffers.

While Weir is loath to single out one project over another, she points to the agency’s Dendreon work as particularly innovative and emblematic of Vox’s abilities. “It’s such a new therapy, so there were layers upon layers of complexity we needed to take into consideration. It was an incredibly exciting launch for



Above: Cancer awareness ads from Cephalon (left) and an ad for Cambia (right); Top: A Vox-created book

the prostate cancer community,” she enthuses.

As for the future, look for Vox to push more deeply into social media, which Weir identifies as “a critical area,” in the months ahead.

“It’s not just talking about the tactics themselves, but also about what we can do to help clients establish appropriate policies,” she notes. Beyond that, the agency will continue to work off its still-new model, which she believes is particularly well-suited for today’s medical marketing climate. This will extend to Vox’s hiring as well, with the agency looking for individuals who can slide easily into its multidisciplinary culture.

—Larry Dobrow

“There was a little sense of ‘Wow, this agency does things differently’”

—Lorna Weir