



AT THE HELM

Steve Wray, president and CEO

PERFORMANCE

Double-digit growth for second half of 2010, expecting similar in 2011

HIGHLIGHTS

AOR wins in dermatology, urology/oncology and diabetes

Roster grew with 14 new brands added; set to launch five products

Three new offerings were developed and rolled out

CHALLENGES

Regulatory ambiguity

Non-approval of three pre-launch brands

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 169

"In many ways, the word 'digital' will be dropped as a qualifier for describing agencies"

—Steve Wray

Cadient Group

After three pre-launch brands failed, veteran firm picks itself back up

Non-approval of three pre-launch brands put a dent in the first half of 2010 for Cadient Group. But things improved as the year progressed, and the agency experienced double-digit revenue growth for the second half of the year.

"Launch brands are still key portfolio jewels, but they come with risks," says president and CEO Stephen Wray. "It hasn't stopped us from winning more launch brands, it's just the model for launching brands has dramatically changed."

Momentum continued into this year with new AOR wins already in dermatology, urology/oncology and diabetes, and Wray expects double-digit topline growth ending 2011.

Expanding capabilities was a 2010 priority. Three new offerings were developed and tested last year, and they rolled out successively this year. First, an insights and analytics platform called Reveal launched in January. An online customer service portal called Engage followed in April, and a social community based research and insights platform called Convene became available in June. Wray says all three have been "very favorably received" and had the expected business impact.

Taking guidance from clients asking for "seamless agility," Wray reintegrated strategy, digital and tech solutions into the Cadient brand last year. (They were separated into different business units in 2009).

The client roster grew to include 14 new brands, and Wray is pleased it has expanded in line with his plan to increase large-cap pharma, specialty medicines, biotech therapies, and D&D business. AOR wins last year spanned cardiovascular, oncology, HAE, hemophilia, and metabolic brands, as well as multiple diabetes brands. One oncology brand was lost to network consolidation.

"We began to see the model we set forth for a more agile agency—particularly focused on specialty brands across a broader healthcare footprint—gain momentum," Wray says. "We continue to believe an agile model is the answer for the majority of our customers. It's particularly true for specialty market customers, which are generally more receptive to a digital first approach to customer engagement." Wray adds an agile model is a "perfect fit" for big pharma companies as they adjust to launching specialized medicines.

Continued regulatory ambiguity around emerging media and social media has been challenging. Wray says many clients lag in mobile despite the fact that their customers are integrating it at a pace "well beyond the tipping point." "Mobile will become dominant within the next 18 months," he adds.

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Above: Landing pages from Cadient Group's website, showcasing the different offerings and capabilities

accepted frontline model of engagement."

Headcount has pretty much held steady at about 121. Wray is pleased that employees have referred 60% of new hires. James Griffith, senior creative design lead, was among those joining last year.

Five products will launch now and early 2012, and Wray plans to continue diversifying and broadening the portfolio. Going forward, he notes a "significant wave of change" will be set in motion by the patent cliff.

"Portfolios will be dramatically reconstructed," he says. "The approach to customer engagement will continue to evolve. New emerging customers will come from this transformation, such as more institutional clients and more activity from payers and a variety of stakeholders that will play a significant role beyond just brand marketing." —Tanya Lewis