

CDM New York

Network reconfigures to nine units in effort to be more cohesive, collaborative

smaller and makes it actually smaller. There's much more of a sense of community as we're on two floors, where we used to be on multiple disparate floors, and you can really get much easier access to the talent that you want now."

The CDM empire now consists of nine units: CDM New York, the original agency; AgencyRx, which was launched as a fully firewalled conflict shop; CDMiConnect, the network's patient CRM shop; CDM World Agency, which is everything outside of the US; SSCG Media, the network's media agency; Entrée Health, CDM's access and reimbursement arm; Platform Advisors, a strategic consulting group; CDM Group, consisting of administrative functions like HR and finance; and Link 9, the network's shared production hub.

"We took all the graphic services, a lot of the back-end digital production," says Wise, "and rather than building it and making it great nine times over for each division, we decided to do it together and to find efficiencies there, because we know that production costs are a big target for our clients."

Wise, along with president Carol DiSanto and chief creative officer Josh Prince, will be running the network from CDM Group, where they've framed the network's mission as "nurturing a culture of fanatical collaborators." "We really want to push an environment where people are working together across this empire in a seamless way to deliver to our clients," says Wise. "Consolidation is the biggest trend in the industry right now and it's such a big focus we want to become the consolidation agency of choice, both within Omnicom and for our clients."



Above: A journal ad for Pfizer's Premarin, drawing attention to the obstacles some menopausal women face

CDM Group ordered all of its units to convene vision meetings this year, says DiSanto, with the aim of sharpening individual identities for the different companies while reinforcing a common culture with the aim that "you could potentially move in and out of each business unit and still be grounded."

"Our goal ultimately is to have the strongest individual agencies in each category," says Wise, "the best media group, the best consulting group, the best agencies each independently, but then to be the best at working together to create custom solutions for our clients in the ever-evolving marketplace."

"Now, [digital] better be shiny, but it's also got to be connected, measurable and have a real ROI"

—Josh Prince

CDM's main agency became CDM New York as the network sought to better define its worldwide administrative group and back end functions from its flagship US advertising and marketing services shop.

"Before, when we asked our employees how big CDM is, some would say a thousand people, some would say three hundred, some would say five hundred," says Ed Wise, chairman and CEO of CDM Group. "This gives it more of a sense of completeness and identity and the borders are drawn."

The company brought in Kyle Barich from CDM Princeton to run New York, which has a staff of 360, mostly in the old *Daily News* building on 42nd Street, along with a handful at the network's West Coast outpost in San Francisco, servicing Genentech and Accuray, and 17 in LA servicing Amgen. The shop took as its motto "Inspiring people."

"It's who we are and it's what we do," says Barich, who is managing partner, director of client services at the firm. The reorg, he says, "makes the agency feel



AT THE HELM

Ed Wise, chairman and CEO (middle, standing) and Carol DiSanto, president (middle, sitting), flanked by the leadership team

PERFORMANCE

Revenue grew in the “high single digits” and headcount held steady

HIGHLIGHTS

Reformatted network into nine units: CDM New York, AgencyRx, CDMiConnect, CDM World Agency, SSCG Media, Entrée Health, Platform Advisors, CDM Group and Link 9

Handled first iPad selling tool for Novartis

Came out on the winning end of the Bayer consolidation, picking up Mirena and expanding Xarelto

SSCG Media Group picks up the Pfizer professional media buying and planning business after its consolidation

Opened secondary offices in a few key markets: Spain, Germany and Canada

CHALLENGES

Being innovative and efficient at the same time

Becoming the “consolidation agency of choice”

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

The network trains staff through its CDM University program. CDM also holds a monthly Digital Circle wherein execs from across the network share best practices and showcase excellent work. There’s a quarterly Creative Circle, an “internal awards show,” as Prince puts it, and a global version that draws in offices in Europe, South America and Canada. The company has also invested a lot in digital training, with courses dubbed Digital 101, Digital 201 and Digi-Six Pack.

“We’re just making sure everyone brings the standard of training up,” says Lori Klein, managing partner, director, strategic and scientific services. “As a result, we’ve been able to take on a lot of great work from clients and we’ve done 50 different digital applications, including tablets, mobile apps, websites, gaming and a whole array of services.”

The shop has handled some 50 tablet presentations, brand.com work, gaming assignments and what they say was the first iPad selling tool, for Novartis.

“Pfizer, our biggest client, is committed to being paperless and so are we,” Barich notes.

CDM New York had a solid year, with revenue growth in the “high single digits” for 2010 but headcount holding more or less steady.

The shop did well with the Bayer consolidation, picking up Bayer’s Mirena based on its work on a premarket contraceptive and expanding its business on Xarelto to include digital. CDM New York also won Pfizer’s Flector Patch, hospital antibiotic Dificid for Optimer and an assignment for Accuray’s Cyberknife radiosurgery, a key win for the agency’s San Francisco shop. The sole loss was of Merck Serono’s cladribine, which got an FDA complete response letter.

The New York office is led by managing partners Barich (director, client services), Klein (strategic and scientific services), Ben Ingersoll (creative director, copy), Mark Friedman (creative director, art) and Christine Finamore (chief digital officer), along with associate partners Chris Palmer (co-creative director, copy), Debra Polkes (creative director, art) and Chris Fiocco (director of account planning).

After several years of acquisitions, CDM World Agency pressed pause on the buying binge to focus on opening secondary offices in a few key markets, including Spain, where the company is building up its Madrid agency to serve as a conflict shop to its Barcelona agency; Germany, where CDM is eyeing an expansion from its Munich digs, servicing Bayer, into Berlin, where Pfizer has a presence; and Canada, where CDM hopes to expand from a Montreal shop into Toronto.

“Our focus has really been to be not the biggest and the best but the most cohesive and collaborative,” says Wise. We want to stay close to our clients and build by expanding our current relationships and DNA within our agencies versus going out and acquiring a million different agencies. It’s a growth strategy that’s worked domestically.”

The company has also established an internal “emerging markets think tank,” with a panel of experts on the BRIC markets and an advisory panel of local market experts.

SSCG Media Group, which Wise calls the biggest professional media agency in the US, is doing well, with Pfizer having consolidated all professional media buying and planning into them. The agency’s search engine marketing capability, staffed by several Google-certified search consultants, is particularly hot, says Wise.

“There’s been a real shift to challenge ourselves to work with our clients in a different way,” says Barich, “to be more nimble, tailor-made, project-based teams. Clients need efficiency and we’re trying to find ways to be more innovative and efficient at the same time.” Some assignments might pair a couple staffers from different areas of expertise, then dissolve that team once the project is completed.

Meanwhile, the time of doing digital for digital’s sake—Prince calls it “the era of the shiny toy”—has given way to more pragmatic digital work. “Now, it better be shiny, but it’s also got to be connected, mea-



Above: Musicians on Call delivers the healing power of music to people who need it: hospital patients, staff

asurable and have a real ROI. And media is a huge part of that.”

Some things never change, though, and the value of creative is one of them. “The best creative examples are things where the clients actually feel like they’re co-owners of the work,” says Ingersoll, “that it’s lightbox-worthy.” That’s a Pfizerism, referring to the lightbox showcases in the lobby of the company’s 42nd Street headquarters, where its best advertising is showcased. “That was the charge from one of our clients,” he says. “She said, ‘I want something that’s lightbox-worthy,’ and she got it.” —Matthew Arnold