



AT THE HELM

David Ormesher, CEO, and Jon Sawyer, principal

PERFORMANCE

"Best year ever"

HIGHLIGHTS

Increased global work with Novo Nordisk, created YouTube channel dedicated to insulin education

Created a migraine app for GSK and an app for Takeda, was awarded Takeda's Uloric and developed a consumer wellness program

Headcount up to 51 after five employees were hired

CHALLENGE

Finding the right fit when recruiting

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

"We're not looking for transactions—we're looking for long-term relationships"

—David Ormesher

closerlook

2011 outlook projected to be 'really good' after firm's best year ever

Chicago shop closerlook deepened existing client relationships last year, and organic growth propelled top and bottom line increases. Digital accounts for 65% of work, and CEO David Ormesher is seeing more mobile integration and development of multibrand franchise platforms. Though declining to reveal specifics, he reports 2010 was the agency's best year ever.

"It was an interesting year," he says. "It started out with a lot of question marks from our clients. By the third and fourth quarters brand teams were finally getting comfortable with their business outlook. They're still a little cautious about getting value for their spend. They needed a lot more attention last year. We focused on how we could be better business partners and netted out as we picked up organic wins."

Global work increased with Novo Nordisk, which awarded new pharma and device business. Highlights include NovoMedLink.pro, a multibrand enterprise platform with both the web and mobile applications that aggregates diabetes content for HCPs and their patients. The agency also helped Novo create a YouTube channel dedicated to educating patients about using its insulin pens after discovering many homemade (and often inaccurate) videos.

Other accomplishments include creation of a migraine app for GSK, and an app for Takeda that helps patients with chronic abdominal conditions.

Takeda also awarded Uloric, the first new gout treatment in decades.

The agency helped develop a consumer wellness program for a major (unnamed) consumer packaged goods company, and then connected the client to major health insurance companies that can use it with their members to help reduce healthcare expenses. Ormesher says food, insurance and pharma companies are all "trying to cross the chasm" in terms of addressing wellness. Closerlook is helping clients figure out how to accomplish this and still make money.

"Pharma is moving beyond the pill and looking at other products and services that help patients," he adds. "We've heard talk about things like extending from pharma to OTC in a very blended approach. There's an innovators dilemma though – for multi-billion dollar companies, new ideas can't be \$20- to \$30-million dollar ideas. The threshold for investment is pretty high."

Ormesher has also seen relationship marketing mature, which he finds gratifying. "Talking about relationship marketing 11 years ago, I felt like I was spitting in the wind," he recalls. "No one really knew what to do with it. Now I'm seeing good examples of people embracing relationship marketing and building cross brand platforms—like Novo."



Above: NovoMedLink.pro, a multibrand enterprise platform with both web and mobile applications

Five new employees joined last year, including James Ellis, director of digital strategy, bringing headcount to 46 ending 2010. It's 51 now. Ormesher is "always recruiting." He will increase digital strategy, account planning and writing teams this year.

"There are a lot more people in street right now—really good people—but finding a good fit is never easy," he says.

The outlook for 2011 is "really good." Closerlook continues to push the digital envelope—one client is funding augmented reality research—and budgets continue to increase. A new business development push is also slated. "We're not looking for transactions—we're looking for long-term relationships," Ormesher says. "In 24 years, I've seen a lot of new ideas and new technologies come and go. Regardless of new technology, everyone needs to stay really focused on the customer." —Tanya Lewis