



Kane & Finkel Healthcare Communications

San Francisco shop stays steady as it expands its brand across the pond

AT THE HELM

John Kane, principal and managing director, and Bob Finkel, principal and chief creative officer

PERFORMANCE

Revenue up slightly to 5%

HIGHLIGHTS

New wins came in from Bayer, Pfizer, QLT Ophthalmics, LG Life Sciences, Xoma, XDx and Ortho Dermatologics

Brought David Knechtel on board as client services director in London

Launched brand neutral workshops

CHALLENGE

Growing the global business

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



It was a year of evolution for Kane & Finkel Healthcare Communications (K&F), as the San Francisco shop expanded by opening an office in London.

“Along with the physical manifestation of a global presence, we opened our minds to think even bigger,” says principal and chief creative officer Bob Finkel. “The agency has matured in terms of the brand we’ve become. We’re more confident than we’ve ever been. We want to be indispensable for clients—it’s sort of a mantra at this point—and it really resonates with our team. The agency as a whole has a unified focus that we haven’t experienced to this degree in our history.”

Though revenue was only marginally up (about 5% compared to about 4% in 2009), principal and managing director John Kane says clients showed increased interest and activity, and they were generally less apprehensive about moving forward.

David Knechtel, formerly of Johnson & Johnson in the UK, came aboard as client services director in London. Three others joined, all with client side experience in UK markets. Worldwide headcount is about 76 (up from 73 ending 2010).

A new offering for prospective and existing clients—brand neutral workshops on fundamental marketing principles and techniques—launched in London last year and is now offered in the US as well.

“We want to make sure client teams are grounded in fundamental and advanced marketing communications principles,” Finkel explains. “It’s something most agencies don’t necessarily share. We’re operating on the philosophy of becoming indispensable to clients. When we let them step behind the marketing curtain, it elicits trust, a higher level of responsibility and credibility.”

Finkel adds that the workshops are designed to help crystalize marketing opportunities and issues and better determine communications priorities that align with business objectives.

Subsequently, the agency offers targeted capabilities that fall into two strategic categories—creative communications that help to maximize market potential and problem solving communications that help to minimize market obstacles.

Throughout this year the London office is conducting nine of the workshops with Allergan (three for its aesthetics division; six for its ophthalmology division). Attendees include marketing and sales departments and affiliates from around the world. London is also driving strategy for the Astellas EU Transplant franchise business and is marketing Advagraf, Prograf and Modigraf (immunosuppressive agents).

New wins last year included Bayer (digital work for Nexavar), Pfizer (medical and scientific writing in neurology); QLT Ophthalmics (product work); and LG Life Sciences (human growth hormone pre-market work). K&F also landed work with Xoma on a diabetes product in development and the launch of three anti-hypertensive drugs; and HCP and patient



Left: An educational ad for Astellas Transplant, touting the future of transplant medicine; top: Gilead’s Insights mobile app for patients with pulmonary arterial hypertension

promotion for XDx, a molecular diagnostics company. Wins this year include promotional work for Ortho Dermatologics’ HylatopicPlus and other brands.

CNS Response and Biocodex accounts were resigned. Work with AspenBio Pharma went inactive.

Finkel says clients are keen to get into new media channels and digital work overall is “aggressively growing.”

Kane notes building relationships with procurement people is becoming increasingly important, and he says negotiations sometimes prove challenging.

Both principals have been spending a lot of time in London—Finkel will be there all summer. Focus for the rest of the year will be on growing business organically and with new clients. Kane expects 8% to 9% growth for 2011. —Tanya Lewis

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