



AT THE HELM

Matt Lane, managing director and Kevin McHale, EVP, executive creative director

PERFORMANCE

Grew from two AOR assignments to 25 brands

HIGHLIGHTS

Running global ad campaign for Pfizer's Sutent; added Boehringer Ingelheim and Gilead to its roster

Added 70 staff members, including Julie Bowers, SVP, account group supervisor, Rory Braithwaite, director of analytics and McHale

CHALLENGE

Lost Pfizer's Thelin

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

“We find the ‘if-you-can’t-measure-it-it-never-happened’ philosophy still becoming more pervasive”

—Matt Lane

NeON

Draftfcb’s multichannel offshoot grows organically from Pfizer, adds 70 hires

NeON was literally born of the multichannel movement. In 2009, Matt Lane, then with Area 23 (the Draftfcb Healthcare conflict shop), was itching to open a new agency. Lane’s clients were obsessed with multichannel marketing, and he wanted to provide every discipline needed to support brands, hit physicians where and when they’re looking for information, and measure ROI.

“We felt there was a niche that needed to be filled,” says Lane. NeON started in a SoHo loft with two AOR assignments on Pfizer’s Relpax (migraine) and Zmax (antibiotic). It’s now running the global ad campaign for oncology drug Sutent (2010) among roughly 25 brand assignments within the drugmaker’s Established Products Business Unit. Their maturity dictates what Lane calls “white-space targeting” (i.e., using a halo of non-personal touchpoints).

The agency has also added work from Boehringer Ingelheim and Gilead (Atripla/HIV), filling out its loft with over 100 employees working on more than 40 brand assignments ranging from digital promotion and traditional advertising to consulting, and grown significantly off a small base while delivering on Lane’s “one-line” vision.

“That’s not to say every client we work with here utilizes our full multichannel capability with the analytics and strategy that supports it, but probably 75%

of them do,” adds Dana Maiman, president and CEO of Draftfcb Healthcare. For instance, this year NeON consolidated all disciplines for Boehringer Ingelheim hypertension drugs Micardis and fixed-dose combo pill Twynsta, expanding into interactive, DTP and managed markets.

NeON lost one account, PAH drug Thelin, after Pfizer pulled it due to safety issues.

Organic growth this year has included Pfizer’s Alsuma (migraine), King heritage product Skelaxin (muscle relaxant) and AOR work for Greenstone, Pfizer’s generic supplier. The agency has also moved beyond established drugs, notching pre-launch orphan brand taliglucerase in 2010, a biosimilar form of an enzyme that Pfizer hopes to co-market with Protalix for Gaucher disease.

“Our working style is to partner very intensely with our clients,” says Lane. Sutent was a great example. The agency brought lead marketers from six regions to NY for a three-day strategic workshop, papering the walls with ideas. “One of those nuggets literally became the [global] campaign,” says Rich Levy, Draftfcb Healthcare EVP, creative director.

The work helps account for staff growth: 60 new joiners in 2010, and another 10 in 2011. Among those coming on board was Julie Bowers, SVP, account group supervisor, whose strengths include broad interactive experience, including on tablet platforms. NeON often serves as a consultant on emerging media, even working for some clients to develop their own proprietary platforms.

Lane considers NeON’s greatest achievement to be last December’s hiring of Kevin McHale, EVP, executive creative director, a very seasoned pro who spent about 12 years at Euro RSCG helping launch such blockbuster brands as Prevnar, Chantix and Bextra. Now with a clear-cut creative leader, “We have a lot of reinvigorated people here trying to come up with big ideas that can address all the channels,” says McHale.

NeON also brought on a director of analytics this past April, Rory Braithwaite from Digitas. His foil is pharma CRM expert Victoria Summer, NeON’s new SVP, head of multichannel promotion. The multichannel and analytics teams align closely and can tap into the Draftfcb network to elevate their offering.

NeON has a commitment, like its Draftfcb brethren, to excel at analytics and competitive intelligence. “That becomes the engine that drives all of our metrics, key performance indicators and dashboards... Most of our clients utilize our analytics capabilities,” says Lane, whose challenge is to build on growth. And they are becoming more enamored with measurement. “We find the ‘if-you-can’t-measure-it-it-never-happened’ philosophy becoming more pervasive in our industry.”

—Marc Iskowitz

A-to-Z For contact details, rosters, wins, losses, billings and creative samples of 150 firms see our Agency A-to-Z, pages 169 to 207