



AT THE HELM

Ahnal Purohit, president and CEO

PERFORMANCE

Revenue up slightly vs. 2009 (in the \$10 million to \$15 million range)

HIGHLIGHTS

Added new diagnostic clients WaferGen, Phenogen Sciences, Becton Dickinson and ImmuneTech

Expanded work with Ferndale Laboratories; and added work from Eisai for AcipHex ER and CSL Behring's IG business

Celebrated 25th anniversary

CHALLENGE

Staying relevant

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

Purohit Navigation

Chicago firm stable as economy starts picking up, clients start spending again



Chicago shop Purohit Navigation focuses on small to midsize specialty brands, and its roster of long-term clients has remained stable, though president and CEO Ahnal Purohit, PhD reports some are still struggling with budget cuts. Revenue was up slightly from 2009 (in the \$10 million to \$15 million range).

"The economy is definitely picking up, which means our customers are getting more confident spending again," Purohit says. "And we've gotten smarter. We've had time to think about how to work even more efficiently, leverage dollars more effectively and help clients succeed with less. As the economy picks up, some things will return to 'the way they were,' many won't, and those who can't adapt will likely suffer."

Last year marked the agency's 25th anniversary, and Purohit is very proud of its ability to remain independent, adapt and remain relevant to its client base. She's also very proud that a significant number of the agency's employees have 10-plus-year tenures.

Headcount held steady last year at about 45 with no layoffs. There are a few open positions now. Purohit says it has been easier to find talent this year, noting she recently hired a few "really good" account services people from other agencies.

About four years ago a strategic decision was made to own more of the diagnostic space, and it's paid off.

New diagnostic clients included WaferGen (digital work); Phenogen Sciences (BrevaGen, a breast cancer risk assessment test); Becton Dickinson; and ImmuneTech. The Becton Dickinson assignment encompasses strategic and creative work on the relaunch of its Preamerical Systems Portfolio; promotional pieces for its Urine and Venous franchises; and branding for MAX. For ImmuneTech, work includes both the retail and HCP launch of My Allergy Test.

The agency's relationship with Ferndale Laboratories expanded to work on the launch of Ferndale Healthcare Inc; Analpram Advanced Kit; and product work for Eloquest Healthcare. Additional wins included project management for Eisai's AcipHex ER and promotional educational and strategy work for CSL Behring's IG business. The American College of Rheumatology account was resigned.

"Digital is definitely growing, but there's so much digital that sometimes it also helps to use traditional tactics," Purohit notes. "We have to look carefully at the mix. If everyone is doing everything digital our potential HCPs are inundated."

She adds that the creative and interactive team meets weekly to discuss trends and ideas about new ways to use digital.

Overall, Purohit sees a trend of creative becoming more generic as products are becoming more specialized. She notes the prevalence of "happy patient" materials. "It's sad," she says. "If you're promoting a specialty brand, you cannot have a person running on a



Above: An ad for Phenogen's BrevaGen genetic test; top: Part of an oncology ad for APP Pharmaceuticals

beach everywhere. There's no brand differentiation. A lot of branding is done by color—color doesn't differentiate you. And most pharma companies like blue to begin with, so now we're talking about shades of blue. We're working hard alongside our clients to ensure that we move away from this trend." Both organic and new business wins are expected to continue driving agency growth this year and into 2012.

"Staying relevant is the biggest challenge we all face," she adds. "That means adapting our own model to ensure that we are primed to deliver insights and value that are relevant to clients as their business, and the industry, changes." — Tanya Lewis

"If you're promoting a specialty brand, you cannot have a person running on a beach everywhere"

—Ahnal Purohit