



AT THE HELM
Katy Thorbahn,
managing director

PERFORMANCE
Double-digit growth

HIGHLIGHTS
Roster increased to about 60 brands, including digital AOR assignment for a CNS product launch and digital work for a women's personal care OTC product

Launched an app for oncologists

Rounded out senior management team with new hires

CHALLENGE
Clients shifting spending

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

"We're entering a more specialized world. The scale and how you market is very different"

—Katy Thorbahn

Razorfish Health

Standalone healthcare shop celebrates first birthday with double-digit growth

Rounding its first full year as a standalone healthcare shop, Razorfish Health exceeded expectations. Though managing director Katy Thorbahn can't report specifics, she says the agency experienced double-digit growth within its existing 50 healthcare brands. The roster has increased now to about 60 brands.

"We were very happy to be able to beat our original revenue forecast," she says. "It's been incredibly exciting."

Long recognized as a digital powerhouse, Razorfish was acquired by Publicis in 2009. Thorbahn says it was evident that significant need for digital expertise existed in the healthcare industry. "There seemed to be a lot of interest and energy in the client base on having Razorfish focused strongly on health and wellness," she explains. "It seemed like a perfect time to launch Razorfish Health. We create experiences that change lives—that enable clients to put the right type of tools at patients' and physicians' fingertips so they can help people live better lives. It seems to have really resonated in the marketplace."

The senior management team was rounded out last year. Joining from Razorfish were Debrianna Obara, VP media; Josh Palau, VP, search engine marketing; Matt Comstock, VP, business intelligence; and Jeanette M. Trout, VP of operations. This year Jedd Davis joined from Razorfish as VP of strategy.

Outside hires in 2010 included VP, delivery and technology, Dan Casper (formerly of Pfizer); creative director Kate Davis; and client partner Michael Fox. Headcount was about 160 ending last year. There are currently seven to 10 openings across all disciplines.

Thorbahn says client contracts prevent her from mentioning specifics, but she confirms both organic growth and new wins fueled roster growth.

New wins included a digital AOR assignment for a CNS product launch; site strategy and re-design for a "major" US health network; and digital work for a pharmacy benefits company. Digital experience work for a women's personal care OTC product and digital work for oncology/hematology brands were among assignments from existing clients.

The recession didn't create a "huge negative draft" on business. Thorbahn attributes it partly to the increasing perception of the power and value of digital.

"The challenge continues to be how their spending, reducing or shifting spending," she says. "Some of that is driven by the recession. A lot is driven by where the pipelines are and maturity of brands. We're entering a more specialized world. The scale and how you market is very different. It's about being much smarter about reaching people when they're in a much smaller community and looking for specific information. We need to think acutely about building the right experience at the right time and on the right platform—and about how those interact with each other."

Last year the agency launched an app that helps oncologists find the best treatment

A mobile app to help oncologists find the best treatment for renal cell carcinoma

for renal cell carcinoma patients. Thorbahn says it's a good example of the type of work Razorfish Health believes will become even more powerful as the digital evolution continues.

The team has been very busy pitching. Business is trending up and 2011 is forecasted to end up.

Remaining true to Razorfish's core strengths—innovation being first among them—is a priority. The agency is also continuing to strengthen its own distinct brand identity and ensure that potential clients understand what it has to offer. —Tanya Lewis

