



AT THE HELM

From left: Adrienne Lee (executive managing director), Melissa Cahill (executive creative director)

PERFORMANCE

A new-business spurt included the addition of such clients as Procter & Gamble and Quest Diagnostics

HIGHLIGHTS

Expanded its global focus by signing on with agency network thenetworkone

Kept all current agency clients

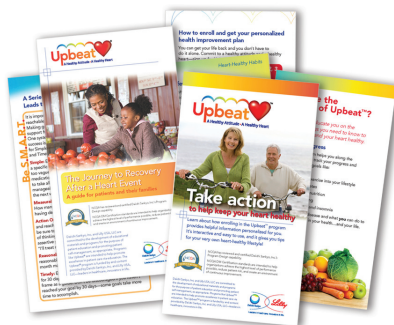
CHALLENGES

Digital demands require augmenting staff

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 181

Beacon Healthcare Communications

Turning digital communications into just one option among many



Beacon Healthcare Communications's big news a year ago was a rebranding effort that ultimately yielded a new tag line ("We hear you") and a quirky/think piece-y blog ("The Listener"). With its internal house in order, Beacon spent the second half of 2011 and the first two quarters of 2012 preaching what it practices: an approach that lumps digital work alongside the other agency mainstays.

"Lumps" might not be the most accurate or elegant word, but Beacon was quicker to the digital game than many of its similarly situated agency peers. Unlike some other small- to medium-sized firms, Beacon wasted little time in prioritizing digital programs. Well in advance of the last 12 months—when "get more digital!" became as ubiquitous a rallying phrase as "multichannel marketing" once was—the agency took steps to eliminate the notion of a distinct digital silo. In 2012, digital is merely another tool in Beacon's kit.

"In healthcare more than almost anywhere else, content must work across every medium. The story that we're telling has to be consistent, which means making sure it's medium-agnostic," stresses executive creative director Melissa Cahill.

Beacon's clients, happily, no longer need any prodding to hop on board the digital bandwagon, which rep-

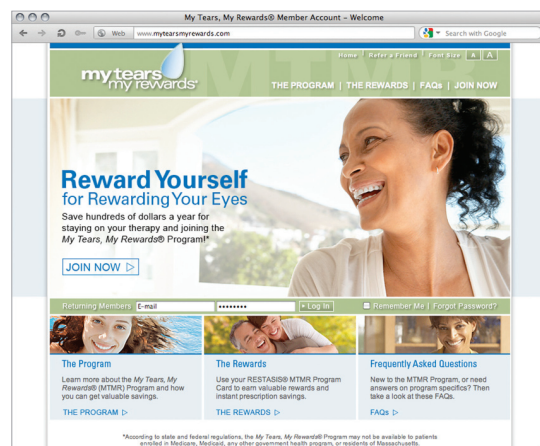
resents a big change from a few years ago. "They totally get it," says executive managing director Adrienne Lee. "Any content that communicates to a potential customer, whether it's a consumer or a physician or an insurance company, has to be available any time and any place, and on every type of device."

To meet client demand, Beacon beefed up the size of the digital team to 25. It also brought in Bruce Markewicz to lead it, as managing director of Beacon Interactive. Overall staffing hovers around 75, about the same number it was at this time last year.

The silo-free approach may or may not have contributed to Beacon's new-business spurt, but it couldn't have hurt. The agency had organic growth and growth from new clients over the last year. It expanded its relationship with Bioventus, the renamed/rejiggered biologics and clinical-therapies arm of medical-device specialist (and Beacon client) Smith & Nephew. It also added work from Allergan (AOR for the consumer launch of acne balm Aczone Gel), Daiichi Sankyo, and Pfizer (assignments in the managed-markets space).

New clients included Procter & Gamble (for physician's network MDVIP), GTC Biotherapeutics (for anticoagulant/anti-inflammatory drug ATryn) and Quest Diagnostics (around its HIV and maternal fetal tests). The firm didn't resign or lose any accounts. "We were very fortunate," Lee says.

Beacon execs believe the agency is properly sized not only to accommodate current business but also anticipated growth. That said, they plan on doing more



Beacon's work for Lilly's "Upbeat" heart-health program (above left) and Restasis (above)

than a bit of the latter in the months ahead. The firm has signed on with international agency network thenetworkone, with an eye on growing its global portfolio. "It gets us into emerging markets in a different way," Lee notes. Too, like many other firms, Beacon hopes to push deeper into the specialty-product realm, with Lee mentioning the oncology space as a target.

"It's not a secret that the days of the big blockbuster drug are just about gone," she continues. "These different types of products will demand different types of ways to communicate, and I think we're well positioned to take advantage of that." —Larry Dobrow

"In health-care more than almost anywhere else, content must work across every medium"

—Melissa Cahill