



AT THE HELM
Brad Oleshansky,
president-CEO

PERFORMANCE
Net revenue was about
\$30 million last year

HIGHLIGHTS
Invested in a 10-person
medical content team

New business included
accounts from Novo
Nordisk, UCB, Watson,
Teva and Amgen

Acquired minority stake
in global agency Iris

CHALLENGES
Making sure content
is sound from medical
and regulatory angles
while still meeting busi-
ness objectives

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

**“Women are
the chief
medical
officer of the
household”**

—Brad Oleshansky

Big Communications

A process of evolution leads
Detroit shop to a broader audience

Big Communications President-CEO Brad Oleshansky called 2011 a year in which the agency had one of its biggest evolutions, making major personnel investments, beefing up its senior management team, and further integrating with owner Meredith Corp.

The Detroit-headquartered 100-person agency invested in a 10-person medical content team led by new chief medical officer Greg Licholai, an M.D., M.B.A and former neurosurgeon who was hired away from McKinsey’s healthcare practice. Like most agencies, Big had been outsourcing its medical writing to freelancers. But outsourcing didn’t yield the strategic benefits to clients that in-house expertise would.

“We want to make sure our content is not only sound from medical and regulatory but that it’s also paired with business objectives,” Oleshansky said. “Clients are begging for the capability. It’s going to be a big part of our business.”

Along with Licholai, Big added to its management with a new chief creative officer in Milad Elmri and promoted head of talent Caryn Rainey to SVP of operations and administration. Rounding out the executive team is SVP of client solutions Ivan Holtz and SVP of finance Mike Lee.

New business came from Novo Nordisk, UCB, Watson, Teva, Amgen, Regeneron and NPS. No accounts left the building, Oleshansky said. That haul was good for about 10% growth, Oleshansky said, though he wouldn’t reveal specific figures. (Last year, Oleshansky said net revenue was about \$30 million.) Big also became mobile AOR for an unnamed top-five pharma company, a win that came from working with Hyperfactor, a mobile agency also owned by Meredith.

Meredith, best known as the publisher of women’s lifestyle magazines like *Better Homes and Gardens* and *Family Circle*, purchased Big in 2008 as part of its

effort to diversify into marketing services. Big operates as part of the Meredith Health division, which works under the insight that, as Oleshansky put it, “women are the chief medical officer of the household.”

“They make all the decisions for health decisions,” he said. “We have unique access, permission to deliver content through *Better Homes and Gardens* and other publications. We can leverage an 85 million-woman database and identify hand-raisers for virtually every disease state.” For example, Oleshansky said Big can segment the Meredith database and within a magazine’s shrink-wrap send, say, a brochure with a specific call to action based on a particular disease or condition.

Expect to see the Meredith relationship lead Big to look for more women’s health products as part of its new-business strategy, though the status of women as decision makers also impacts male-focused products.

Another Meredith impact is its minority stake in Iris, a global agency that’s done work for the 2012 Olympics and counts Sony as a client. The investment gives

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Latisse is one account that benefited from Big’s ability to command a large audience of women

Big and other Meredith subsidiaries an international footprint. “Next year, we’ll be able to deliver global programs in a more seamless fashion,” Oleshansky said. Big now has offices in Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles.

Standout work included a mobile tour for Novo Nordisk’s consumer diabetes program through its Indycar sponsorship. And Brilliant Distinctions, Big’s much-lauded CRM program for Allergan is still running. “It’s been mentioned by Wall Street analysts as a driver of Allergan’s growth,” Oleshansky said. “We think it’s the largest consumer loyalty program in all of pharma.” — *Matthew Creamer*