



AT THE HELM
Janet Donnelley,
president

PERFORMANCE
Reestablished itself as a
top industry brand

HIGHLIGHTS
Created Economic Vue,
a new division focused
on the payer space

Snagged a high-profile
win with the account for
Novartis's cancer drug
Afinitor

Worked on a public
service campaign in
conjunction with the Ad
Council

CHALLENGES
Entering the medical-
device area

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

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—Janet Donnelley

LLNS

With a big legacy behind it, this firm makes its move into the payer space



LLLNS might have the most profound legacy to live up to on a daily basis of any agency in the business. With Al Nickel's induction into the Medical Advertising Hall of Fame in February, all four of the agency's founders—Nickel, Ken Lavey, Mike Lyons and John Swift—have been professionally immortalized. Few agencies can boast of having once had such a congregation of marketing savvy under one roof.

With LLNS having reestablished itself as a top industry brand—the agency reversed course on its ill-fated decision in 2007 to rebrand as LyonHeart—current leadership feels pressure to honor that heritage every day. To that end, LLNS spent the last year setting itself up for another few decades of success.

Central to its growth plans was the creation of a new division, Economic Vue, focused on the payer space. While LLNS isn't alone in recognizing the necessity of devoting resources and attention to this space, it's one of the few firms that spun out a distinct division concentrating on it, and stocked that division with payer specialists.

“As we were looking at the industry, we saw that it wasn't just about the professional and the patient anymore,” says LLNS president Janet Donnelley.

“There's a third *p* and that's the payer. You ignore it at your own peril.”

Having specialists like Economic Vue on board early in the creative process has become a central part of LLNS's approach. The general idea: to marshal resources and assemble cross-discipline teams sooner in the client-engagement process rather than later. Donnelly says the concept fosters “early excellence.”

The firm's most important new hire, chief creative officer Steve Hamburg, has helped lead the charge. Hamburg, formerly chief creative partner at Rosetta and a 25-year industry veteran, brings what Donnelly calls “the best of both worlds—he can do strategy and he can do digital” to the table, teaming with senior vice president/creative director Brendan Ward to, as Donnelly puts it, “up our game even further.”

On the new-business front, LLNS's flagship win during the last year was Novartis's cancer drug Afinitor. “I think we had the most passion of anyone who pitched,” Donnelly says. LLNS also expanded its relationship with Ethicon Endo-Surgery, for both its surgical tools and colorectal surgery divisions. Given how LLNS spoke last year about wanting to delve deeper into the medical-device world, the Ethicon wins represent a nice walk-the-talk/talk-the-talk moment.

But when it comes to a recent assignment of which Donnelly is especially proud, she points to a public service campaign. Alongside Rx Mosaic and Unit 7, LLNS worked on the Ad Council's first-ever professional campaign, a push on behalf of the US Department of Health and Human Services' Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality to encourage better patient/clinician communications. Its basic message:



LLNS worked on the Ad Council's first professional campaign (above left); an ad for Xalkori (above)

Asking the right questions can often yield as much, if not more, information than conducting a series of medical tests.

Donnelly says the assignment was gratifying on several levels. “Obviously anything that encourages more communication is right up our alley,” she explains. “But getting to work with the Ad Council, which is such an iconic organization, was so fun and so rewarding. You think about some of the things they've done—Rosie the Riveter, Smokey the Bear—and you realize that these are people with such a great creative eye.” —Larry Dobrow