



AT THE HELM

Roberto Ascione, president

PERFORMANCE

Revenue rose to \$25 million

HIGHLIGHTS

Helped to develop the health-and-wellness social video portal Videum.com

Brought greater depth to offerings in consulting and technology

Expanded agency presence in Paris and Mumbai

CHALLENGES

Lost one client due to agency network consolidation

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

“The age of the client free-styling with digital is over”

—Roberto Ascione

Publicis Healthware International

Publicis firm goes deep to bring clients a higher level of efficiency



Publicis Healthware International (PHI) president Roberto Ascione spent last year increasing the agency’s expertise and deepening capability in its three key areas of play—consulting, digital communications and technology solutions.

“I’m driving the agency to create new innovations versus waiting on clients to bring us briefs,” he says. “It was a very good year, and this one is going well. Everything we’re doing is trending up.”

PHI is owned by Publicis and headquartered in Salerno, Italy, and New York. Global revenue was up to more than \$25 million, and comparable management scope growth was up 40% over 2010. US business was on par with global in terms of growth.

Ascione says consulting and technology solutions were both significantly deepened last year. The technology business encompasses development of software platforms spanning mobile, HCP engagement, and digital video and other social media.

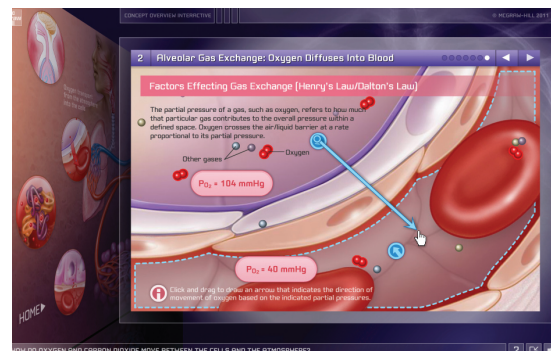
“With digital becoming more mature in terms of client needs, the level of sophistication they require is increasing,” Ascione says. “In the past, they might have one digital project or a couple per brand. Now each brand has plenty of digital initiatives, and at a company level there may be many. The age of the client free-styling with digital is over.”

“With this in mind, we believe it’s impossible to build things from scratch each time,” he continues. “It’s important to figure out how to improve outcomes for clients through technology, better process, and building frameworks or platforms that allow you to become more efficient and return this efficiency to clients, who have to do a lot more with less.”

A great example of the sort of innovation the agency is involved in is Videum.com, a health-and-wellness social video portal for both HCPs and consumers developed last year in collaboration with US-based Videum Health, Inc. The site was announced at the Health 2.0 conference last September, and it went live in public beta this March. It’s drawing about 1,000 unique visitors per day, and publishers, scientific societies and others are proactively posting videos.

“The portal is open to everyone, but we added registration for physicians so you can convey video content only to physicians if you want,” Ascione explains. “Today, that’s not possible on general video portals. It also leverages a proprietary language enablement technology that allows videos to get subtitled in any known language. Physicians or patients anywhere in the world can also translate videos into their own languages. This was nonexistent before. And, because search engines can read subtitles, the videos are much more search friendly than other videos.”

Nondisclosure agreements prevent Ascione from providing much detail about accounts. He does report that PHI expanded its relationship with GE from X US to include US medical diagnostics and radiology business, and work with an existing big pharma client



The agency’s work in 2011 included pieces for Videum (above left) and McGraw-Hill (above)

grew in the US around KOL management related technology. The agency also won an enterprise consulting assignment regarding sales force work from a top-10 US pharma company and then pitched and won the contract to build an enterprise software platform. Only one piece of business was lost due to agency network consolidation after the client was acquired.

The Paris office expanded last year, and a ground presence was added in Mumbai.

This year Ascione continues to boost consulting and technology capability and expand business through both. He’s also very busy helping Publicis siblings adopt PHI’s innovations. — Tanya Lewis