



AT THE HELM

David Paragamian, US president, and David Dunn, CEO

PERFORMANCE

ApotheCom medical business grew between 5% and 10% last year

HIGHLIGHTS

Became part of Huntsworth Health's APO Group, along with ApotheComScope Medical, Axiom and Nitrogen

Added work from Takeda, Amgen, Baxter and Daiichi Sankyo

CHALLENGES

Retooling business to adapt to new alignments in the market

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 187

“Digital is no longer a department. It’s just part of who we are”

—David Paragamian

ApotheCom Group

Adopting a dynamic approach to being an “indispensible” partner



After being interviewed from an airport last year, ApotheCom’s US president David Paragamian spoke with *MM&M* this year from a New Jersey parking lot, in between closing one client meeting and traveling to another. “We’re not hiding behind a spreadsheet,” Paragamian says, a nod to the tendency both he and ApotheCom CEO David Dunn have to get out of the office and take a hands-on approach to growing the firm. “Senior people don’t just pitch the business,” he adds, “they work the business.”

But even though on-the-go schedules remain a constant, 2013 has brought changes for the medical publisher, which now comprises a fourth of the new Huntsworth Health unit called APO Group, made up of ApotheCom, ApotheCom ScopeMedical, the e-learning group Axiom and HCP agency Nitrogen.

“We wanted to be an even more indispensable strategic partner to our clients,” Paragamian explains, and says the APO arrangement promotes communication continuity. Being able to meet a client’s full communications needs, he adds, reduces the chance that a third party will come around and say “let’s re-create that.”

Not all of the change is internal, however. Paragamian says the alignment and new business also reflects a

shift in med-ed, a term he says is “dated and historical.” Paragamian says a more apt term for what they do is medical communications “because I can create an entirely new disease class, a new nomenclature... and disseminate data in a really impactful kind of way.”

In addition to the new alignment, the last year has seen such clients as Takeda, Amgen, Baxter and Daiichi Sankyo come on board at the firm—a big factor in what Paragamian says is growth of between 5% and 10% for the ApotheCom medical business last year.

Paragamian says what’s also changed is the clear shift in digital demands. “Digital is no longer a department. It’s just part of who we are.” To meet this need the company has doubled its digital group and developed client tools like the ALIVE! iPad tool, which allows 10 participants to tap into the same conference.

Paragamian pointed to an advertorial and unbranded disease education series as an example of the creative fusion that is part of the company’s offerings. The project tapped into the skills of vice president, creative service, Karen Lastanna, who has been with the company 12 years, but also takes advantage of newer digital offerings to provide a fresh perspective.



An iPad piece by ApotheCom (above left) and the firm’s work for a recent CORE conference (above)

Paragamian says the company keeps employee skill sets high through a university concept he brought over with him from his days at Havas that helps staff “invest in their personal toolbox,” with programs like midday courses, speaker events or sessions where team members share best practices.

“I like to think that what we are is scientific storytellers... there’s an elegance to that. There is an art to that and it happens across a variety of surfaces.”

—Deborah Weinstein