



AT THE HELM

Deb Deaver (president), Dina Peck (managing partner and creative chief)

PERFORMANCE

After a tough 2012, agency is benefiting from an infusion of new business

HIGHLIGHTS

New work from Questcorp, Actelion, Ostuka and BMS

Acquired significant business through Healthwork partnership with BBDO

CHALLENGES

Keeping digital edge while developing greater patient focus

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

CDMiConnect

Ahead of the pack in digital, and doubling down on patient marketing



CDMiConnect doesn't want to be all things to all clients, its leaders say. Instead of building out add-ons, the firm is doubling down on its core capability: patient marketing.

"At our annual visioning meeting, we put a stake in the ground," said managing partner and executive creative director Dina Peck. "We're putting patients first and representing the patient voice. Our lens is always going to be though the ultimate customer."

The shop's heritage in digital CRM seems no less relevant in an age of accountable care and outcomes-based everything, when moving the needle on adherence is the holy grail for many brands. But like all agencies that were ahead of the technological curve, the shop has done a little soul-searching now that its peers are starting to catch up on that front.

To preserve their marketing edge, they put together their Emerging Digital Group, a 20-strong team of digital savants charged with keeping the shop on top of tech trends and pushing the envelope. EDG members include creatives, project managers and accounts personnel. They do account work like everyone else, but also help keep colleagues and clients up to date.

"They're hyper-focused on digital," says Peck. "There are experts focused on digital publishing, apps and app development, Responsive Web Design.

They're piloting and prototyping emerging technologies where there aren't benchmarks."

The shop offers a Digital Trends series of monthly workshops on topics like digital publishing, SXSW, health literacy, RWD, user experience ("UX") and more—and has promoted technical fluency by giving all employees iPads or iPad Minis.

"We decided to make sure everybody is using the technology," says Peck. "It doesn't matter if you're an account person or the receptionist, every person here should live and breathe pixels."

"We're committed to being fluent in this space," says president Deb Deaver. "We're budgeting toward that at a time when many agencies are looking to cut costs."

Peck notes that the shop was pushing clients to adopt responsive web design 18 months ago, and that other shops and companies are just now implementing it.

The agency is also looking to build its offering around patient access, with an emphasis on measurability, and has revamped strategic planning "to take advantage of the patient ecosystem and its evolving presence."

"It's more than just motivators and barriers," says Peck, "it's going to a much bigger patient ecosystem to uncover insights."

And the shop fielded a 3,000-patient and caregiver study—a first for them—dubbed "Patients First," which is set to drop in the fall. "We kept looking at third-party data, and we weren't getting the insights we needed," says Deaver, "so we said, 'Let's do it ourselves.'"

Businesswise, the shop has bounced back from a tough 2012, adding two West Coast accounts—for



A digital campaign for Actemra (above left) and a pro bono piece for the Brooklyn Free Clinic (above)

Questcorp and Actelion—and one back east, for an Otsuka/BMS venture. The West Coast business will be serviced through the shop's San Francisco satellite office. The shop also gained a lot of work through CDM's network-wide Healthwork partnership with Omnicom sibling BBDO. That work, much of it on an influenza brand, has helped to expand the firm's global footprint. CDMi Connect's multichannel focus translates outside the US, its leaders say.

"We have so much experience working with fulfillment vendors and tracking data, and we're loving bringing that expertise to other markets," says Peck. —Matthew Arnold

"Our lens is always going to be through the ultimate customer"

—Dina Peck