



AT THE HELM

Donald Young, group managing director

PERFORMANCE

A “really solid year of growth” in 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

Combination of Discovery Chicago, Williams-Labadie and Saatchi & Saatchi Science under the Discovery USA umbrella

A “significant” number of wins from legacy clients

CHALLENGES

Making sure that specialty healthcare marketers are aware of the new unit’s augmented capabilities

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

Discovery USA

Merging three of PHCG’s agencies results in a unique set of offerings



Discovery Chicago, a 25-year-old agency specializing in high science with an emphasis on medical communications, merged with its Publicis Healthcare Communications Group (PHCG) sibling Williams-Labadie in January 2013. All of Williams-Labadie’s 55 employees were retained except CEO Peter Labadie, who retired last September.

At press time, PHCG reported that Yardley, PA-based Saatchi & Saatchi Science is also being integrated into the fold. The agencies have been rebranded Discovery USA. Discovery Chicago’s group managing director, Donald Young, will continue leading as group MD of Discovery USA.

Young says he’s been in the business long enough to have lived through a few mergers, and he reports the one with Williams-Labadie has gone very smoothly.

“The approach we took was to be as transparent as possible with clients and employees,” he says. “It really was an integration.”

Williams-Labadie veterans James McGuire and Jeff Pazen were promoted to SVP, chief creative director

and SVP, digital strategy, respectively. Two Discovery Chicago employees, April Meijer and Sarah Russe, were promoted on the account side. Meijer was named SVP account director, advocacy group and Russe was named VP, account director, advocacy group.

Joining this year were chief scientific officer Wolf Gallwitz, PhD; VP account director Christopher DeProfio (who had worked for Williams-Labadie some years ago); and SVP account director Simriti Ranajee, previously of Abbott Molecular.

PHCG won’t permit Young to discuss specifics about revenue, headcount or clients. He does say that 2012 was a “really solid year of growth.”

“I’m proud we didn’t lose any employees or clients during the integration [with Williams-Labadie],” he notes. “I was really happy with how the team executed.”

Clients range from large pharma to biotechs and small companies. Primary categories of focus are infectious disease, immunology, CNS and cardiovascular. Young reports a “significant number” of wins from legacy Discovery Chicago and Williams-Labadie clients.

“We’re also finding some Discovery Chicago clients, which were traditionally more medical communications clients, are expanding work with us because we now have the creative capability of Williams-Labadie,” he adds. “The same is true with Williams-Labadie clients expanding work to include medical communications given Discovery Chicago’s expertise.

“Without actively marketing ourselves yet, clients are understanding the value of bringing the science and creative together as well as the value in having one agency that can manage their whole story,” Young continues. “It’s not a just physician-down relationship



These two pieces for Sanofi Pasteur highlight the firm’s mix of creativity and communications

anymore. Being able to communicate to all the stakeholders is a real value that we bring clients.”

Digital remains a growth driver, and Young is pleased that digital capability is embedded in the agency and fully integrated with creative. “Digital has almost become like the price of entry into the market,” he says.

A “couple of big pieces of business” have been won in 2013, and Young expects another year of growth.

“Our plans,” Young adds, “are to target specialty healthcare marketers who can benefit from our deep scientific bench strength and strategic relationships that create a consistent brand message to reach key audiences through various channels.” — Tanya Lewis

“Clients are understanding the value of bringing the science and creative together”

—Donald Young