

Draftfcb Healthcare

Growing empire raises its account numbers and excitement level



“Everybody wants a hand in [nivolumab]. Everyone’s been touched by cancer”

—Dana Maiman

Digital promotion and biotech-drug accounts require the kind of specialized expertise that can leave agency execs scrambling for the right staff. The flipside is that an agency roster stacked with high-profile brands often helps attract the best and brightest. Perhaps the epitome of the trophy account is Bristol-Myers Squibb experimental oncology drug nivolumab. In fact, just as this likely blockbuster was being hailed in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* for its potential to be the first of the immunotherapy drugs known as anti-PD-1s to reach market, Draftfcb Healthcare picked up the professional brief.

That not only raised the excitement level in the hallways, it boosted the agency’s recruitment efforts. “Everyone wants a hand in it,” says Dana Maiman, president and CEO. “Everyone’s been touched by cancer.” With a product like that, the line outside EVP/chief creative officer Rich Levy’s door has been a long one. Then again, Levy says, “Yesterday we had a meeting in my office about the smallest of projects, and yet because it has the opportunity to be so inter-

esting and so fun, there were 15 people in my office.”

At press time, Draftfcb was in the process of onboarding a lot of other new business. In the 12 months to May, the IPG stalwart had brought in 25 new assignments across multiple categories and multiple audiences, including 11 in the first five months of this year.

“What’s most exciting is almost half of these new assignments come from organic growth,” says Maiman. That goes for the nivolumab win, which came on the back of the work Draftfcb has done for BMS melanoma drug Yervoy (ipilimumab), a molecular cousin of nivolumab.

The agency, which did the TV campaign for asthma/COPD drug Spiriva, built out its respiratory franchise at Boehringer Ingelheim with a new indication and an unnamed product; expanded its relationship with Novartis MS brand Gilenya from consumer to include the professional business; broadened beyond the DTC for Auxilium’s Xiaflex to snag the HCP work on the Dupuytren’s drug; penetrated deeper into Teva Women’s Health from the Plan B oral contraceptive to ParaGard and also the global launch for Seasonique; and built on Amgen’s Prolia business to add Xgeva, the oncology version of the osteoporosis biologic.

It’s also handling a pre-launch AOR assignment for Acorda Therapeutics in the epilepsy area and is working with AbbVie on a pre-launch consumer campaign. As Draftfcb racked up wins, its revenue from May 2012 to April 2013 enjoyed double-digit growth.

The second half of the year continues with lots of pitches. Maiman says she hopes more of these take place overseas. Draftfcb Healthcare already has about seven or eight offices outside the US, including strong presences in India and South Africa, and about half of clients take advantage of them.

Maiman spoke of a “two-pronged approach glob-



Work for the uKnow peanut-allergy blood test (above left) and MS drug Gilenya (above)

ally.” First, in January the company inked an affiliation with Argon Network, a band of 22 independent agencies in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and South Africa. In addition, Draftfcb may buy some of those agencies outright and is actively pursuing other acquisitions. “That’s definitely a huge objective for us for 2013/2014,” says Maiman.

In the meantime, Draftfcb padded out its US network, acquiring Tarrytown, NY-based Hudson Global last September. “What was so attractive to us was not to have a second promotional med-ed offering,” says



AT THE HELM

Rich Levy, EVP and chief creative officer and Dana Maiman, president and CEO

PERFORMANCE

In the 12 months to May, brought in 25 new assignments

Headcount rose from 354 to 500 people

HIGHLIGHTS

Snagged the account for Bristol-Myers Squibb's experimental oncology drug nivolumab

Broadened work for Gilenya and Xiaflex

Landed work on the global launch of Seasonique

Formed an affiliation with Argon Network, an international group of 22 agencies

Acquired Tarrytown, NY-based Hudson Global, whose clients include IBM and Major League Baseball

Remodeled its midtown Manhattan offices

CHALLENGES

IPG on the outs for Pfizer consolidation

Finding and training the right mix of staffers to meet the agency's evolving needs

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

Maiman. "It was more to give us access to [Hudson's video-streaming and broadcast] technology."

Hudson's streaming clients include IBM and Major League Baseball. Maiman and Levy envision leveraging the technology for dinner meetings, speaker training, or internal client communications.

The Hudson takeover brought the healthcare network's members to six, counting full-service shops Area 23 and NeON, as well as med-ed agency ProHealth and managed-markets expert Mosaic. It's anchored by Draftfcb Healthcare—which is referred to internally simply as "33rd St."

Keeping watch over this growing empire would be a full-time job for about anyone. But Maiman had also been overseeing Draftfcb New York, the flagship office of the healthcare network's mainline agency sibling. She relinquished the reins at Draftfcb NY in January.

"With our spirit of acquisition, and especially because so much of this is global, it became evident

pointment, Maiman admits, in that Spiriva had given them a beachhead at the client, and who wouldn't like some organic growth from the no. 3 US drug maker?

Meanwhile, getting the right people in the right place has been a tall order for the two execs. Between 2011 and 2012, headcount rose from 354 to about 500, Levy estimates. A big hire was Sarah Hall, joining from Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness as group managing director to help expand the DTC practice at 33rd St. Still, "We have over 100 openings," Maiman notes.

"Even with so many open positions, we're still incredibly picky," adds Levy, "because this is not the right place for everyone, and we want to make sure the level of talent is exemplary." Because it's not always about going outside to find the right person but sometimes about developing your own people so they can move up to open positions, the agency has stepped up training. "If we can't find them, we'll make them," quips Maiman.

The training transcends healthcare advertising,

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An Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) awareness piece for the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America

that I couldn't focus on New York the way it deserved to be," says Maiman. Her attention and energies fully focused on healthcare again, she and Levy have ambitious plans. "Rich and I are constantly dividing and conquering because there's so much [pitch activity]," says Maiman.

The execs boast about what they say is a very high conversion rate on new-business bids. Unfortunately, thanks to the Pfizer agency consolidation that was announced last fall leaving IPG shops on the outs, the agency probably won't be calling on the New York drug maker anytime soon. Pfizer's lockout is a disap-

including such programs as creative and account service, how to be an effective coach, selling skills, presentation skills, and how to work with creative people.

"Our approach to people is proactive," says Maiman. "Going to people before they come to you and tell you they're resigning for a new opportunity."

Draftfcb Healthcare also renovated its 33rd St. space, basically lopping off the upper half of cubicle walls, facilitating collaboration. Says Levy, "When you set up a new office space, you don't think about a 30% reduction in e-mail because people are speaking to each other more, but that's what happened." — Marc Iskowitz