



AT THE HELM

Elizabeth Appelles, CEO

PERFORMANCE

Reporting double-digit growth

HIGHLIGHTS

Won search and digital media work with Roche Genentech's brands

Launched GTO Media, a standalone media practice

Will run a committee for health and wellness at the 2015 World's Fair

CHALLENGES

Finding the right balance of employees to help the agency anticipate the future

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

Greater Than One

Finding growth by helping clients create businesses around digital



Greater than One's 2012 could easily be described as the year the agency's training wheels came off. "Digital is maturing, so now we're taking a leadership role," says its CEO, Elizabeth Appelles. "Four or five years ago, we were more of an add-on."

Now that role is reversed. In one year, the agency itself has added on three new divisions, increased its headcount by 30 and is reporting double-digit growth. Its updated roster reflects that success.

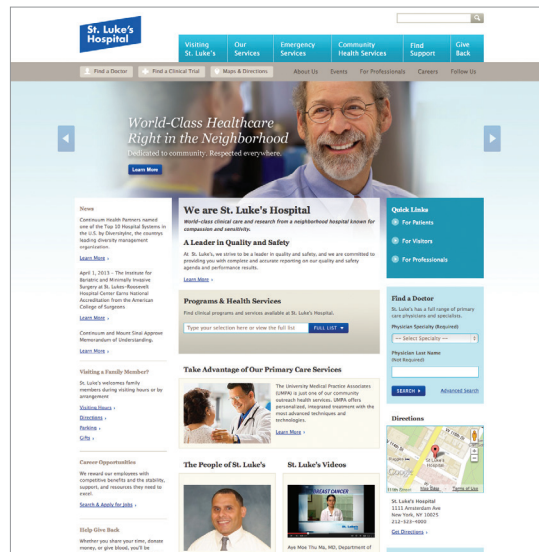
The shop, headquartered on Hudson Street in lower Manhattan, won digital media and search work across all of Roche Genentech's brands in 2012. In addition, work was picked up from Jazz Pharmaceuticals and CA Technologies.

By the time this article is published, Greater than One will have launched GTO Media—its "standalone media practice based on 13 years experience of digital media." This expansion comes only a year after the agency launched GTO Labs. Appelles describes "Labs" as "the space for ideas," and it is that space which gave birth to the BioDigital Human—a 3D anatomy, educational tool which was featured at TedMED and SXSW 2013.

Appelles describes the launch work that Greater than One did for Sunovion's Omnisaris and Zetonna as a turning point for the agency. "Digital isn't just a tactic any more. We've done a couple of purely digital launches. I would say that has been the biggest change in the space. And it has forced us to be mature. To become a leader, we've hired people across a wider range of skills and disciplines."

With digital becoming more of a standalone strategy—and not simply a tool in the marketer's arsenal—Appelles sees the matured channel as growing into a service, a form of assistance. "Our view is that the pharma sales model is changing from being product-focused to service-focused. Rather than telling doctors why a product is great, the new way of selling is helping them manage their patients and practices," she explains. "A health information platform can be a key asset for selling because it enables a sales rep to say to a doctor 'this is an educational tool you can download to your desktop and use to educate your patients.' So it becomes more a conversation about increasing patient health literacy—and achieving better health outcomes."

To accommodate this new normal, Appelles sees recruiting new employees as a balancing act, one which has been steadied by the addition of a new HR director: "It's a combination of a lot of things. You



Mobile work for Omnisaris (above left) and the website for St. Luke's Hospital (above)

want somebody with gravitas, history, sensibility, intelligence, age and maturity—but you also need to find people who have 'lived' in this digital world. If you've lived in it for a while, then you can anticipate the future of digital. But if you haven't, it's hard to see."

And Greater than One anticipates a future where it not only "helps clients use digital to market their products or create values for themselves," but also to "create businesses around that," says Appelles. The agency will also take part in the 2015 World's Fair in Milan, where it will run a committee for health and wellness at the US Pavilion. —Kevin McCaffrey

"Digital is maturing, so now we're taking a leadership role"

—Elizabeth Appelles