



AT THE HELM

Becky Chidester,
president

PERFORMANCE

Growth of between 10% and 13% for the health-care unit in 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

Won OTC Agency of Record status from Novartis

Agency experience in the insurance sector provides a strong base for working in the post-healthcare reform era

Instituting a digital university for clients

CHALLENGES

Responding to “the perception of the industry”

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

“[Clients] can’t just put their toe in the water”

—Becky Chidester

Wunderman World Health

Fostering growth by helping clients to embrace “consumer centricity”

Wunderman World Health has arrived. No longer in the middle ground between being a standalone agency and a unit within the WPP universe, the agency of around 250 is now “a full-service global healthcare agency,” according to Becky Chidester, who assumed the then-new role of president of Wunderman World Health in 2010. The headcount is a deceptive one: with access to the larger WPP landscape, the agency can cherry-pick key skill sets and experience from across the holding company.

The favored term here is “matrixed.” Talking with Chidester, this means assembling the best skill sets for each task, a robustness that has garnered designations including a Novartis OTC Agency of Record label. The results of this arrangement include growth of between 10% and 13% for the healthcare unit in 2012, partly by helping clients embrace “consumer centricity.”

The matrix is vast. Wunderman announced a four-part alignment in March that highlighted the constellation of experience the agency can employ for clients: the brand experience group, the consumer engagement division (which handles CRM), Data & Insights (which crunches numbers and translates them into actionable items) and World Health. At the time, CEO Daniel Morel said the alignment will help clients “leverage capabilities in data, digital and CRM.”

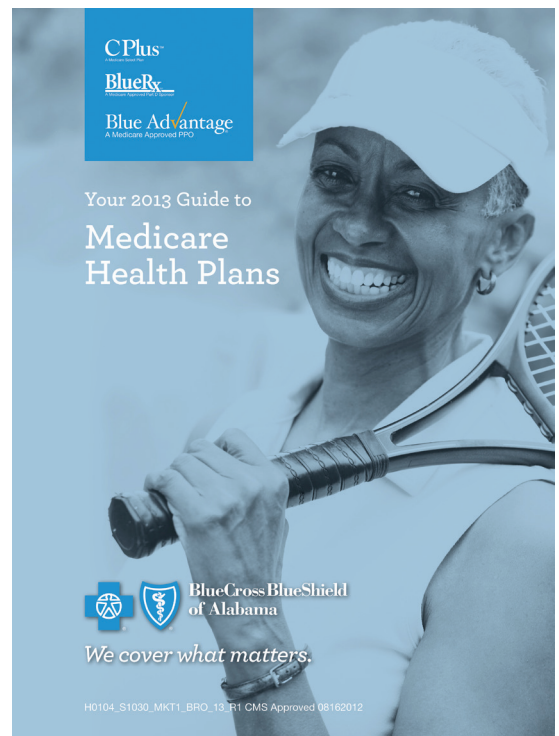
Wunderman World Health’s foundation in the insurance space — BlueCross BlueShield Alabama, Group Health Cooperative and Health Care Service Corporation are clients — has put the firm in a prime spot for the post-healthcare reform era. Chidester says it is also a moment where pharma has a strong desire to respond to what she calls “the perception of the industry” as it courts contact with more players within the healthcare space.

Among the needs that clients must address: making consumer needs a priority and understanding how con-

sumers navigate health. As an example, Chidester notes that insurers now have to learn to talk to individual patients as opposed to just selling to employers who will buy coverage for a block of potential patients. Those individual patients want credible, trusted information that will be cross-referenced and checked against their social networks and the breadth of the web.

Chidester says another client challenge is realizing that new conversations with new audiences take a lot of work. Clients are learning that going digital doesn’t mean just starting up a website — it entails establishing an overall presence that makes them top-of-mind with their potential customers. “They can’t just put their toe in the water,” she explains. “If they want to engage customers and doctors they really need to look at engaging them.”

Chidester says the how of that is achieved through engagement and advocacy, and helping clients reframe what constitutes a return on investment — as in a longer relationship in which brands can influence behavior.



Wunderman World Health produced this piece for KBMG Blue Cross Blue Shield Alabama

Part of this includes educating clients. Chidester says her group conducts a sort of digital university, in which they walk clients through what it means to move away from “something very campaign-oriented” to a dynamic that educates and engages.

The skill sets for this type of guidance are diverse, but Chidester says finding the right talent and keeping it is not a problem. The heat around healthcare is drawing prospects who are excited about the opportunity to make a difference and dive into things like customer experience mapping to help flip results in clients’ favor. —Deborah Weinstein