

David bests

In a year when goliath health portal competitors About.com, Yahoo Health and MSN Health are hemorrhaging visitors, Remedy Health Media is bucking the trend, with viewership up 50% across all its web properties. That's one sure way to get noticed—and be chosen as *MM&M's* 2014 Media Brand of the Year.

One of the strategies Remedy uses to make an end-run around its competitors is to focus on making a quantitative impact on the way people manage their healthcare, according to CEO Michael Cunnion.

Essentially, a full 40% of Remedy's web visitors use its health portal sites, as well as the internet in general, to prepare for a doctor's visit, according to a 2012 Manhattan Research study. That's a significantly better box score than Everyday Health Network, which had a 36% rating; Healthline, which logged in at 30%; and WebMD Network, which produced a 26% rating.

Plus, Remedy also bests its goliath competitors among patients who use health portals and the internet to evaluate a switch to a new medication. Twenty-nine percent of Remedy users rely on its portals and the internet in general to evaluate a drug switch, as compared to 24% of Everyday Health Network users, 21% of Healthline members and 18% of WebMD Network members, according to the same Manhattan Research study.

The secret sauce behind those numbers? Take great care to create riveting, emotionally engaging content for communities of patients hungry for answers and insights about health in general, and personal maladies in particular, Cunnion says.

"Our properties foster unique relationships between expert and patient," he says. Indeed, unlike many

2013 HIGHLIGHTS

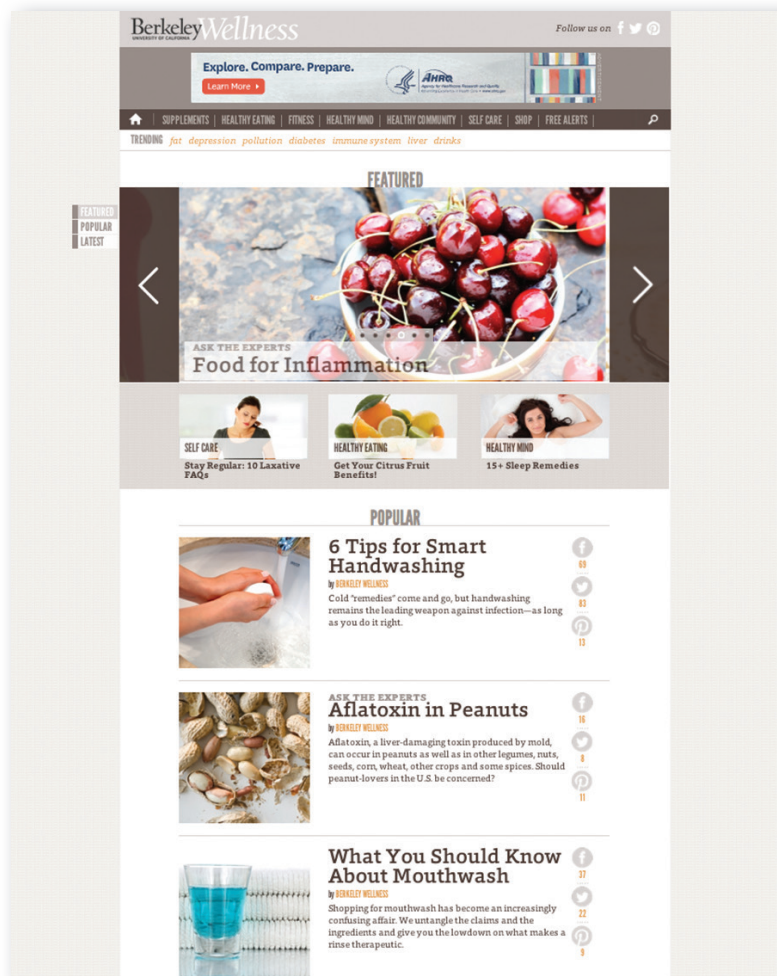
■ Increase in first-half ad revenue vs. 1H 2012: 30%

■ Total unique visitors, Oct. 2013: 6.1M

■ Increase in unique visitors vs. Oct. 2012: 50%

■ Average minutes-per-viewer, Oct. 2013: 4.5 minutes

Sources: comScore Media Metrix, the company



Above: Advice for healthy eating on Remedy's Berkeley Wellness website. Photo collages on social network Pinterest feed back to the site.

healthcare websites sporting Q&A forums devoted to a wide array of specific medical conditions, many of Remedy's are helmed by leading medical authorities, who work long and hard at developing long-term relationships with those patients. In practice, that translates into getting answers back to visitors on its portals like HealthCentral.com that are thoughtful, insightful and current.

The approach is especially effec-

tive with conditions like diabetes, says Jim Curtis, Remedy's chief revenue officer. Despite the fact that 26 million are afflicted with the disease, "there are only approximately 4,000 experts—endocrinologists—they can turn to," Curtis says. Remedy's health portal allows those patients to connect with experts in ways that they simply cannot find on traditional healthcare channels.

The little-health-media-company-

goliaths

that-could also takes great pains to leverage emotionally compelling video on its portals, which it uses to tell gripping stories of high-profile visitors who refuse to allow a medical condition to define who they are, or what they do.

Emblematic of that approach is Remedy's heartrending video of a patient and community member who refused to be beaten by Crohn's disease, and instead went on to climb Mt. Everest and Mt. McKinley, Curtis says.

Equally successful was Remedy's intense effort to raise awareness of World AIDS Day, Cunnion adds. "We worked with leading health authorities," to shape a message that featured arresting stories in both video and text formats of patients who deal with AIDS, and the doctors that treat them, Cunnion says.

Not surprisingly, the digital-savvy firm is also always looking for ways to leverage the very latest in social media to goose interest in its brands, which also include print media. Hundreds of patients, for example, regularly attend Remedy's Twitter chats, which feature experts on particular medical conditions.

And the company has long relied on the photo-centric social network Pinterest to draw in traffic to its Berkeley Wellness portal, berkeleywellness.com, by posting eye-catching photo collages of tasty dishes there, which link back to Berkeley Wellness advice on healthy eating.

Given its proven winning formula, coupled by the heightened sense of interest and urgency in healthcare ushered in by Obamacare, Cunnion likes Remedy's long-term prospects: "We're doing everything we can to get people emotionally connected to our communities," he says. —*Joe Dysart*

L-R: Mike Cunnion, CEO, and Jim Curtis, chief revenue officer, Remedy Health Media

