



AT THE HELM

Andrea Bielecki, president

PERFORMANCE

Growth of 50% year-over-year in 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

Worked with a range of companies including Millennium MPI, Novartis and Medtronic

Added 25 employees, increasing staff by 50%

Moved into teaching clients how to manage their data

CHALLENGES

Making sure rapid growth doesn't hurt the quality of ideas produced

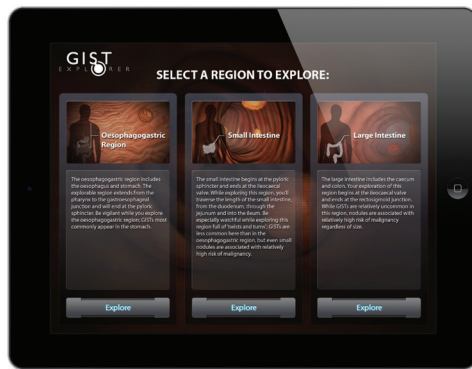
For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 187

“Digital is everything, and clients now realize a PDF on an iPad won't cut it”

—Andrea Bielecki

INVIVO Communications

Digital shop prospers from mainstream demand for expertise



INVIVO Communications never really had to make the shift to digital. They were there right from the beginning. The Toronto-based agency began as a 3D medical animation company in 2002. Some years later, they would become the first Canadian company to receive an iOS developer's license. At the time, they were a highly specialized group serving what was a niche market.

Now digital has gone far beyond being anything even close to a niche, and INVIVO has more business than it can handle. “It's been a tough year keeping up with demand,” says Andrea Bielecki, president of INVIVO.

“Digital is everything and clients now realize a PDF on an iPad won't cut it,” she adds. “There's technology out there to build a full 3-D surgical simulation or an interactive MOA game. They want that and most agencies don't have the capabilities or experience.”

That realization has led to what was a “breakout year” for the agency. Invivo reported 50% growth year-over-year—a considerable bump up from a forecast of just 20%.

Hiring at the agency has kept pace with that revenue growth. INVIVO has added 25 people over

the past year, increasing staff by 50%. They plan to stay in Toronto, but they're “looking for double the space,” says Bielecki. “We are transitioning from an entrepreneurship to a medium-sized, efficiently run organization.”

With over 150 apps under its belt, INVIVO has also started teaching its clients how to manage the data that they receive. “All of these pharma companies have massive, monster, back-end systems that really need to be integrated if you're going to have scale—so having a fundamental understanding of platforms now is key,” she explains. “We understand. That's what we've started consulting on.”

Although the agency won't divulge its entire roster, the companies that INVIVO has worked with include Millennium MPI, Novartis and Medtronic—across different divisions. Bielecki says a particularly good win this past year came from Medtronic Diabetes, for which INVIVO is doing “undisclosed work,” she says.

After the agency's banner year in 2012, Bielecki says that she wants to continue the trend upwards—but also want to proceed with caution. “We want to continue to grow, but we're not interested in doubling or tripling,” she says. “We want have healthy growth. I don't want anything to happen to the quality of the work or ideas. That's been a struggle this year. I don't want to burn anybody out.”

As far as the hunt for new talent is concerned, INVIVO is doing most of its searching for potential staffers locally. The agency is a partner with the University of Toronto's Bio Medical Communications Master's Program (BMC). “We have a strong



Invivo's 2012 projects included work for the GIST Explorer (above left) and other digital animation

affiliation with the program,” explains Bielecki, “We sponsor events and shows and we even work with them to review their curriculum so it more closely aligns with the industry.” INVIVO's animation department is comprised of a high percentage of these graduates.

Drawing from INVIVO's expertise in apps, Bielecki aims for the agency to take that work in the direction of companion diagnostics. “That's what excites us,” she says, “We're interested in actually creating apps that could be medical devices. That's going to happen, and we're not afraid of that. We'd be happy to help a client take something through the FDA.”

—Kevin McCaffrey