



AT THE HELM

The S&S Wellness leadership team, from left: Bill Drummy, Kathy Delaney, J.D. Cassidy

PERFORMANCE

With a client list that is basically unaffected by the merger, the agency plans to bulk up its employee count by 10%

HIGHLIGHTS

Executed work for AbbVie, Pfizer, Merial, Novartis and Sanofi

Merger resulted in increased resources and opportunities for the combined agency

CHALLENGES

Setting the creative bar even higher for next year

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 183

Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness

Emerging from a consolidation with all of its strengths intact

Settling all accounts seemed to be the game plan. On the last Wednesday in October, Publicis moved decisively to consolidate a pair of its Saatchi & Saatchi-branded healthcare firms, S&S Wellness and S&S Health, under the banner of Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness. In the same breath, it announced the acquisition of the well-regarded Heartbeat Ideas and its sister agency Heartbeat Ideas West, which would have “a member of Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness” put at the end of their monikers.

Got all that? When the smoke cleared, we were left with a re-made agency that, unfortunately for consolidation-conspiracy theorists, made practical and financial sense for everyone involved. The 100-strong Heartbeat Ideas shops would no longer find themselves excluded from pitch invitation lists due to their lack of global-network ties. The two Saatchi-branded agencies would formalize a relationship already characterized by the sharing of resources and opportunities.

“Operationally, we already shared many common capabilities and departments. Two cultures coming together has been the focus, but from an operational and client perspective it was no problem,” says J.D. Cassidy, managing director of the merged company.

There were no client conflicts and few, if any, staff redundancies. In last year’s *MM&M* agency issue, S&S Wellness reported a head count of 150 and S&S Health 65; according to Cassidy, head count is now “right around 200,” with the agency expecting to “go up another 10% or so” this year. Meanwhile, Heartbeat Ideas founder and chief executive officer Bill Drummy remains in charge of the Heartbeat offshoots and joins Cassidy and global chief creative officer Kathy Delaney on the S&S Wellness leadership team.

As for why “Wellness” survived in the agency’s name, Delaney says it better fits the company from a practical and philosophical standpoint: “We take a very broad, holistic view of the space we play in, so ‘Wellness’ is more encompassing of our vision.”

Meanwhile, amid the merger/acquisition back-and-forth, there were still clients to think of. That ranks among the strengths of the new company: a roster that doesn’t lack for diversity, both in terms of big/small balance and therapeutic areas. Heartbeat brings Galderma, Janssen Pharmaceuticals, McNeil Consumer Healthcare, Teva and XenoPort to a lineup that already includes AbbVie (which grew its relationship with S&S over the last year), Pfizer (ditto), Merial (for flea and tick preventive NexGard), Novartis (for MS treatment Extavia, among others) and Publicis mainstay Sanofi.

“It was a year we tried to give a great big hug to our existing clients,” Cassidy jokes. As far as new clients go, S&S Wellness added Daiichi Sankyo to its roster.



A piece produced for Crossroads Community Services, an NYC group that helps those in need

Asked about other factors rumored to have precipitated the merger, Cassidy and Delaney say they’d prefer to focus on what comes next. To that end, Delaney expects to set an even higher creative bar for the company’s work. “We believe in uncovering those human truths that are universal to people, and letting ideas and creative spring organically from those truths,” she explains.

Cassidy anticipates a deeper push into analytics. “We feel strongly that we need to be accountable for the work we put out there, both aesthetically and from a results standpoint,” he says. —Larry Dobrow

“We take a very broad, holistic view of the space we play in”

—Kathy Delaney