



AT THE HELM

Donald Young, group managing director

PERFORMANCE

Revenues were “up a bit” from 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

Absorbed Williams-Labadie and Saatchi & Saatchi Science

Organic growth from clients including Mission Pharmacal, Questcor and Astellas

Brought on AOR assignments from Novartis and Abbott

CHALLENGES

Lost work from Braeburn when an opioid delivery product failed to get approval from the FDA

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

Discovery USA

Creating strong momentum with a broad portfolio of services



Discovery USA absorbed two of its Publicis Healthcare Communications Group (PHCG) siblings last year — Williams-Labadie and Saatchi & Saatchi Science.

“It was a year of change, but we still had great momentum with clients,” says Donald Young, group managing director of the Chicago-headquartered agency. “We brought Williams-Labadie in and retained key staff and clients. It was the same with Saatchi & Saatchi Science, though that was a bit more challenging given its location in Philadelphia.

“We now have a great and unique portfolio of services that allow us to provide clients a holistic approach in terms of advertising AOR, digital, advocacy and community engagement, deep scientific capabilities, medical communications and speaker work,” Young continues. “I don’t know many agencies that have all of those offerings.”

Per PHCG, Young can’t disclose revenue specifics, but he says the agency was “up a bit” over 2012.

There was a lot of organic growth with clients including Mission Pharmacal (professional AOR awarded for kidney stone treatment Urocit), Questcor (professional AOR on nephrology indications for Acthar), and

Astellas. Expansion with Astellas included a professional AOR win on Astagraf (prevention of kidney transplant rejection), as well as speaker bureau services for anti-infective products and for oncology reimbursement programs (in conjunction with Medivation).

Relationships began with Novartis, Abbott, Organogenesis and BMS Foundation. The agency won a global professional AOR assignment on Jakavi (myelofibrosis) from Novartis and AOR status for medical communications on Abbott’s nutrition franchise. Organogenesis assigned medical communications project work on Apligraf (wound care), and BMS Foundation awarded advocacy and community engagement project work.

“To me,” Young notes, “measurement of success is delighting clients, growing the business and retaining key staff—not necessarily in that order—and we did all three last year.”

Only one account was lost—an opioid delivery product from Braeburn that didn’t get FDA approval. Work on Takeda’s Edarbi (hypertensive) was wrapped up before the brand was sold to Arbor Pharmaceuticals.

“It’s a very different world than it was five or 10 years ago in terms of how you deliver messages,” Young says. “For example, on a rare disease product, while HCPs are key to success, it’s just as important to create great engagement with patients, payers and patient and advocacy groups. It’s a much more holistic approach than the past. It mirrors the Affordable Care Act and the rise of digital and corporate providers. Our model makes perfect sense in terms of how we see the world and where we see it going.”

Some employees, mostly working on the backend of the business, were let go this year given redundancies. Overall, headcount is up about 23 this year to 185 total.



Prograf from Astellas (left) and Sanofi’s Sklice (above) used Discovery USA’s services

Notable hires in the last year include VP of strategy and analytics Jody Zschiedrich and EVP of client engagement Kristin Keller. Josh Tumelty was promoted last year to SVP, executive creative director.

The agency continues to add strength across its strategy, analytics and media teams. There are at least 20 jobs open this year across all disciplines.

“It’s looking to be a good year,” Young says. “We’re pursuing new business full-throttle.” — *Tanya Lewis*

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