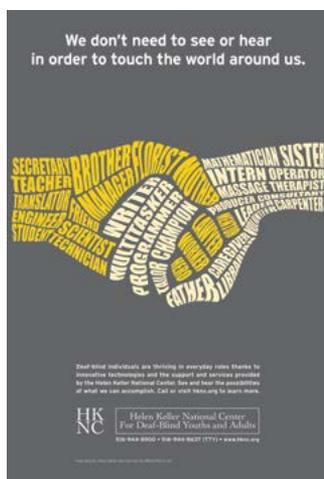


# ghg

Finding success by engaging in conversations about healthcare



**"I think it's a dramatically newer marketplace... but we're excited about it"**

—Lynn O'Connor Vos

**G**rey Healthcare Group's client list includes Bayer, Bayer Animal Health, Bayer Oncology, Bayer Women's Health and Novo Nordisk among others, in addition to being a major part of the WPP universe. That might encourage a less ambitious agency to say "hmm, things are looking good."

But for Grey's team, the time it takes to sit back and take in the view could be better spent connecting with clients, or helping clients connect with the physicians, patients—and increasingly, payers—they seek to engage in conversations about healthcare.

This drive to connect is also behind what CEO Lynn O'Connor Vos tells *MM&M* made 2013 the firm's sixth year of consecutive growth. "We have several offices in the United States and we are exceeding expectations at the top end of double-digit growth in the United States in terms of expanding our team," she says.

The agency's new stateside hires include Marianne Jasmine, SVP client services director; Casey McCann, SVP payer & market access strategy; and Christine Finamore, SVP client services director.

The agency also took on its first-ever chief scientific officer, Wolf Gallwitz, who was elevated from his post as director of scientific services. Managing partner and chief engagement officer Erin Byrne says Gallwitz, whose background includes 20 years of medical communications experience as well as a research and clinical development background, provides essential insight for guiding medical education. Byrne notes that this is a critical information channel for the pharmaceutical industry to be engaged in, because it provides a way to gain mindshare, as fewer and fewer sales reps are able to knock on doors and explain their products.

This is in addition to recently expanding the firm's leadership group in Europe, through hires including Karin Reichl, managing director of Germany, and Simon Pickup, European head of digital.

The workload for this growing team continues to expand. The last six months have also included turning away clients for whom the firm feels it won't, as Byrne says, "delight on a daily basis." She acknowledges refusing work is difficult, but it is necessary for the firm to be able to "do the right thing for every client, every potential client and our staff as well."

To keep things in balance, the agency says it plans on bringing in at least another 30 employees into the New York space, which is already feeling a bit tight after moving in a little over a year ago, as well as adding employees at its Connecticut location. As for the talents in demand, managing partner, brand strategy director, John Dietz says the firm's growth has included "pretty much every department."

The firm says that while some clients still approach its offerings in an a la carte way, they still bring a full game plan to highlight future opportunities to connect. "We'll say to them, 'By the way, you can extend the reach for this by' . . . and then they have the choice of tapping our expertise," Byrne says, adding that this going-beyond approach often means "assignments do expand."

"We make that kind of impression," says Dietz.

Agency leaders note the changes they are helping clients navigate go beyond swapping one approach or platform for a new one.

"It's no longer about information . . . it's really about understanding the needs of the audience," says Byrne, who notes this means taking these insights and creating an experience that tracks with a patient's needs. Part of this speaks to the Triangle of Care approach ghg has been cultivating for several years. Until recently, this has meant putting client brands in exam rooms with healthcare providers in a way that Byrne says improves the experience of the patient. The concept's success has had to morph along with the industry, and the latest iteration converts the triangle into a four-way dialogue in which clients connect physicians, patients and payers to their roster of brands.

While the conversations have more partners, Byrne notes that it is critical not to underestimate how much patients know and what they want. "The power is with the patient today . . . they are demanding a better dialogue so pharmaceutical companies are realizing that

they need to find ways to participate while still being in compliance with regulations because it's what's best for the patients and best for patient outcomes."

What a healthcare patient is shopping for has also expanded, Byrne says. She notes that healthcare has grown to include oral care, eye care, animal health and items that could be construed as lifestyle items, like anti-bacterial agents. It seems like a stretch to include all of these items under healthcare, but O'Connor Vos says the question ghg asks is "how do we make sure that they can make the right choice? Are they educated enough to choose the right product?"

"It all ends with health" is how Dietz explains it, and using this idea to help clients "build new avenues" of outreach. As an example of how ghg combines patient insight and medical care, O'Connor Vos recounts an innovation day at a major hospital. This provider space is getting pressure from multiple sources, and a key

From left: ghg's work for the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths & Adults; Crizal no-glare lenses and the "Think About Your Eyes" public-awareness campaign

payment lever is readmission rates. O'Connor Vos said the firm addressed the teaching hospital about patient outcomes, but also about what may be the surprising reasons that bring patients through its doors. "There are two reasons people end up going back into the hospital... they have an empty refrigerator, they don't have a support system and they're lonely." The firm then asked, "what if every time there was a grocery delivery when they came home?"

This isn't surgery, but it is still healthcare—and part of the patient experience. O'Connor Vos pointed out that a side benefit to lower readmission rates is that this kind of thoughtfulness extends the brand's connection with both the patient, and by implication, with the community.

"They all relate back to that new, broader, meaning of what an outcome really means," Dietz says. This may sound like warm, fuzzy thoughts, but the soft surface is supported by the quantifiable.

Dietz notes that the group is increasingly being asked to apply the hard-math approach early in the clinical development stages, essentially bookending the client experience from development through launch. This means economic models are coming into play far earlier than they once did, but more than that, Dietz says the new approach requires a "new level of evidence. That real proof-of-value modeling I think is what we're pioneering right now."

What's next appears to be a continuation of the now—finding better ways, and more avenues through which clients can engage with patients and the new healthcare landscape. But talking with ghg emphasizes that these are merely signposts—they've already

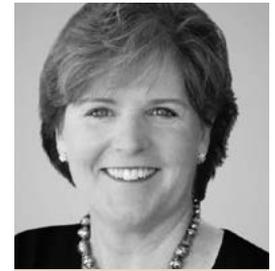
From left: ghg's work for the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths & Adults; Crizal no-glare lenses and the "Think About Your Eyes" public-awareness campaign

moved into what they consider analytics 2.0 which will apply insight that embraces a larger number of players through a larger network of changing touchpoints.

At the same time, the industry—as in advertising and consulting—is expanding in some areas and contracting in others. Yet neither seems to be a distraction.

"We have several major clients who are working with us not only on an agency level, but a WPP level—Pfizer, Janssen, Bayer and others—but we're comfortable with what's going on," O'Connor Vos says of agency consolidation. The healthcare marketplace changes are a source of comfort, but also excitement. "I think it's a dramatically newer marketplace than it's ever been before, but we're excited about it."

—Deborah Weinstein



#### AT THE HELM

Lynn O'Connor Vos, CEO

#### PERFORMANCE

With "double-digit growth," agency had its sixth consecutive year of growth in 2013

Agency's team expanded, including several executive hires

#### HIGHLIGHTS

Did work for a client list that included Bayer, Bayer Animal Health, Bayer Oncology, Bayer Women's Health and Novo Nordisk

Made plans to bring 30 new employees into its New York space

Modified the Triangle of Care approach it has been employing for the last few years to increase the amount of communication touchpoints addressed

Was increasingly asked to incorporate its hard-math approach early in clinical development stage

#### CHALLENGES

Modifying its approach to adapt to the changing nature of healthcare

Dealing with the ups and downs in the advertising and consulting industries

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