



AT THE HELM

From left: Stephen Mullens, principal; Alyse Sukalski, SVP operations; Adam Gelling, principal; Mike Sperling, principal; Steven Gold, principal; Larry Wolheim, principal

PERFORMANCE

Revenue was up 40%, to \$35.2 million

HIGHLIGHTS

AOR wins from Shire, Actelion, Depomed, Genentech and InterMune

Preparing to open a Philadelphia office

CHALLENGES

Convincing clients that investing in senior-level talent will pay off

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

“We can go head-to-head with anybody and have a great chance of winning”

—Steven Gold

Giant

Betting on the value of senior-level talent pays off big for SF agency



Giant continues to gain momentum and broaden its scope of work with both new and existing clients. Principal Steven Gold reports revenue at the San Francisco-headquartered agency jumped another 40% last year to \$35.2 million.

“Our model has always been to hire strong senior-level people and invest in the right kind of talent,” Gold says. “Just two years ago we were half the size we are now. Last year we saw the investment we made in talent over the past five years really start to pay off in client relationships. We can go head-to-head with anybody and have a great chance of winning.”

Shire extended its relationship with Giant last year to include digital AOR status for brands in its ADHD franchise. Long-standing client Actelion awarded US AOR status for Valchlor (mycosis fungoides-type cutaneous T-cell lymphoma). Work also expanded with Depomed and Genentech to include US AOR on Depomed’s cancer pain treatment Lazanda and professional AOR work on Genentech’s Activase (acute ischemic stroke) and on its Oral Octreotide (in development for acromegaly).

“We’ve been able to compete very effectively for

work that is fully integrated work,” Gold says. “We’re really helping clients innovate across everything.”

Giant’s extensive work developing CLM content and implementing CRM solutions for Veeva’s iRep product helped open the door with AstraZeneca, which engaged the agency to provide guidance, technical solutions, and support in the transition to Veeva iRep for personal selling engagements.

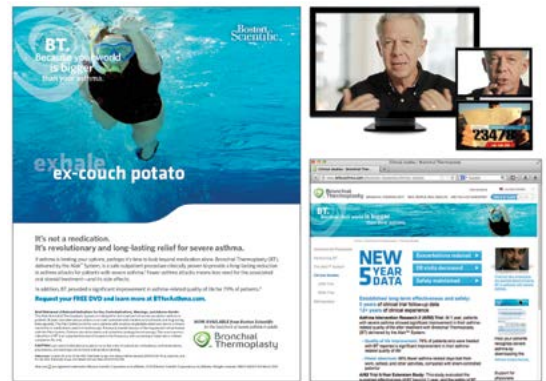
New client InterMune awarded AOR status on Esbriet (in development for idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis). Gold says that work includes some global positioning and concept development.

“As the clients get bigger, it can be harder for us because we’re dealing with procurement and industry norms, but we’ve done a good job of convincing clients that investment in senior level talent will pay off for them,” Gold says.

Full-time employees increased from 165 in 2013 to more than 200 in May 2014. Notable senior hires last year included Christine Armstrong, SVP, managing director, brand experience; SVP creative director Kevin Stokes; and Van Eiseman, VP, director of technology. Armstrong joined from IOMEDIA. Stokes came from Kane & Finkel, which closed its doors this year, and Eiseman previously worked for Digitas in Chicago.

A Philadelphia office will open this summer to service expanding relationships with east coast clients and win new clients. Gold expects to have between 15 and 30 people on the ground there by the end of the year.

“We’re hiring from Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey agencies, and we’re bringing people in from San Francisco,” he says. “We’re looking for people with healthcare, digital, media and analytics backgrounds. The model has always been east coast agencies coming



A diabetes-awareness piece for Genentech (left) and work for Boston Scientific (above)

west, and they haven’t been too successful at it. Having the San Francisco entrepreneurial spirit come to the east coast is exciting to many prospective employees and clients. We’ll do everything in our power to avoid the mistake of putting a couple of people in a satellite office and not retaining our culture. Everyone from the Philadelphia office will spend significant time in San Francisco as part of their on-boarding.”

Revenue is expected to be up another 20% to 30% this year. — *Tanya Lewis*