

**100
AGENCIES**



AT THE HELM
Larry Lannino,
president

PERFORMANCE
Revenues between \$10 million and \$15 million, up by 10% over the previous year

HIGHLIGHTS
Welcomed Zomacton (Ferring's recombinant human growth hormone for children) and a Pfizer project

CHALLENGES
Keeping up with the rise of mobile and digital communications, personalized communications, more social media and a greater leveraging of analytics

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

“A LOT OF FOLKS HAVE CONTACTED US BECAUSE THEY KNOW WE'RE INDEPENDENT.”

—LARRY LANNINO

BEACON HEALTHCARE COMMUNICATIONS

Putting an “i” in digital teamwork



While 2014 was a growth year for Beacon Healthcare Communications, with revenues rising about 10%, its biggest news came not from clients but from its own internal changes: a digitally driven reinvention. “With more than 50% of our business being in the digital realm, it no longer made sense to have a separate digital group,” says president Larry Lannino. “So we brought the digital group into the core agency account team and it’s made for better overall interaction.” The 75-person agency is “stronger strategically, and we’ve become a lot more flexible.”

And a related shift this year, which he concedes sounds strange coming from a self-described traditional account guy, is the rise of its use of data-driven analysis.

“Everybody has been talking about Big Data for years now, but for us, it’s about how we are now using that data, analyzing it to the nth degree, allowing us to consolidate and shift messaging as we need to.”

It all plays into client relationship management. “I’m thinking of one account, in particular, where we started off with a plan in January and, a few months later, can see we need to evolve based on the data. Where we’ll be in August isn’t at all what we expect-

ed—data analysis allows us to adapt that quickly.”

But perhaps more important in an era of recruiting challenges? It’s made coming to work each day a lot more inspiring. “It’s gotten younger around here, more dynamic, more fluid. And with the new hires, there’s been more of an interchange of ideas. It’s more exciting and, frankly, it’s more fun.”

One of his favorite examples is work the agency did for ATryn, which prevents thromboembolic events in hereditary antithrombin-deficient patients, from rEVO Biologics. “We developed an app for the sales force to use on their iPads, allowing them to compare ATryn use to competitors and demonstrate cost savings over time. It was easy for the reps to use and easy for the department head to see the financial benefits. It’s gone very well.”

The new focus has made hiring a little easier, as has its ongoing status as an independent agency. “Many people have gotten fed up with the forced cooperation between network agencies. When you join an agency, you want to join that agency, not be forced to work with other companies. So a lot of folks have contacted us because they know we’re independent,” he says.

The agency welcomed new client Zomacton, Ferring’s recombinant human growth hormone for children with growth failure, as well as a Pfizer project, and digital account director Todd Weinstein and executive creative director Amy Hirschberg. (In 2015, it’s added Alkermes.)

And the digital shift also aligns with what the agency feels are the most important trends facing the industry right now, including the rise of mobile and digital communications, personalized communications, more social media and an even greater leveraging of analytics.



Beacon teamwork is evident in a journal ad for Allergan (above left) and a PowerPoint presentation for EMD Serono (above)

But perhaps the biggest industry story of 2014, he says, was the dramatic saga of Bill Ackerman’s Pershing Square Capital Management play for Allergan. While it was ultimately unsuccessful, Lannino believes it may mark a sea change for the pharmaceutical industry, as activist groups realign themselves. “It changed the game,” he says, “and who knows how it could affect other hedge funds?”

—Sarah Mahoney