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AGENCIES



AT THE HELM
Ken Ribotsky, President and CEO

PERFORMANCE
Net revenue of from \$5 to \$10 million in 2014

Concentrating on brand strategy and strategic creative in a highly collaborative environment

HIGHLIGHTS
AOR for Entera Health's medical food brand EnteraGam for IBS and continuing partnership with Genzyme's Pompe disease franchise

Working on brand design, strategy and rebranding for Pierre Fabre Dermo Cosmetique USA's Glytone

CHALLENGES
Highlighting teamwork and eliciting input across the board

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

“OUR CLIENTS GET HIGH-LEVEL CLIENT SERVICES WITH EXPERIENCED PEOPLE. WE HAVE NO B OR C TEAM.”

—KEN RIBOTSKY

BRANDKARMA

Smaller can indeed be better



Brandkarma leaders jumped off the hamster wheel and are now enjoying an agency with a much smaller footprint, a less frenzied production schedule and more meaningful work. “We aimed to get back to the basics of doing good work for good clients,” shares Ken Ribotsky, president and CEO.

The agency debuted its slim physique at the start of 2015 and the new approach has energized the team. A few things converged for the independent healthcare marketing communications agency late last year, presenting Ribotsky and co-owner Dorene Weisenstein Ribotsky, executive VP and chief creative officer, “an opportunity to realign and re-trench our value system and take dramatic steps.”

The complete restructuring required the agency to break ties with a handful of previous clients, reduce staff by about 75% and eliminate its overhead.

The result? A streamlined team working together on accounts they care about and choose to service. Brandkarma is no longer trying to compete to become a premier midsize healthcare agency. “We have taken ourselves out of the running,” asserts Ribotsky.

The shop, with 2014 revenue in the \$5 million to \$10 million range, zeroes in on brand strategy and strategic creative. “We consult with our clients and help them determine the best direction for their brands,” Ribotsky shares. “We still offer many of

the same services but with a less complicated production schedule.”

Last year Brandkarma became AOR for Entera Health, Inc.’s medical food brand EnteraGam for IBS. The agency also took on additional responsibilities for Prometheus Labs.

The agency continues its partnership with Genzyme on its Pompe disease franchise. The team produced patient communications and some professional communications for the rare genetic neuromuscular disorder. “We are passionate about the Pompe patient community and have been working with Genzyme for a while,” Ribotsky says. “It’s satisfying to work in the orphan-disease area.”

The team has been working on brand design, strategy and rebranding for Pierre Fabre Dermo Cosmetique USA’s cosmeceutical Glytone, a professional line sold at doctor’s offices. The agency’s work is expected to appear in the 2016 line.

“We’ve been told what’s different about us is that our clients get complete access to our leaders,” Ribotsky relays. “Our clients get high-level client services with experienced people. We have no B or C team.”

The agency encourages a highly collaborative environment, highlighting teamwork and eliciting input across the board. According to Ribotsky, client services can contribute ideas to the creative team and similarly, the creative team can think about solutions to the sales piece.



Provista’s complete patient-information packaging (above left) and Anser’s ad (above) showcase Brandkarma’s insight

The agency shrank from about 40 employees in 2013 to 10 people in 2014. “We looked at what we needed to move forward with our new focus,” Ribotsky reveals. “The timing was right.”

Looking back 25 years to his first foray into the industry, Ribotsky recalls a significantly different business. “Healthcare was about providing the best possible health solutions. Now it’s about providing the most efficient solution,” he asserts. “Those two ends don’t always meet.”

—Rebecca Mayer Knutsen