

**100
AGENCIES**



AT THE HELM

Clockwise from top left: Eric Bishea and Seth Gordon, managing partners; Leana Wood; Mike Webster; Kevin Barnett

PERFORMANCE

10 new accounts and 15% bump in revenue

HIGHLIGHTS

Launching two new full-service practices: FronTier Managed Markets and Bioeclipse

Opened an LA office for management consulting firm Promidian

CHALLENGES

"Pushback and frustration" over drug pricing

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

“ BUT THEY ALSO ASK FOR OUR COUNSEL JUST BASED ON THE FACT THAT WE WERE INVOLVED WITH SOME FAIRLY LARGE BRANDS AND DID SOME CUTTING-EDGE WORK WHEN WE WERE ON THE PHARMA SIDE.”

—SETH GORDON

**THE
ACCESS
GROUP**

Building in competitive advantage



The Access Group enjoyed perhaps its finest year in 2013, landing 34 new accounts and doubling its revenue. So it's only by comparison that the company's 2014 looks less impressive, because any number of agencies would be thrilled with Access's 10 new accounts and 15% bump in revenue; head count pushed past the century mark, to 102.

Access saw its share of structural change as well, launching two new full-service practices: FronTier Managed Markets is designed to help clients identify more effective ways to communicate with entities like health insurers and accountable care organizations, while Bioeclipse is targeted at biotechs that need assistance on matters like navigating clinical pathways. The two new practices join a handful of others under Access's roof, among them managed-markets specialist Catalyst, policy expert Government Policy Systems and education arm StrataMed.

Access also opened a Los Angeles office for its management consulting firm Promidian. The company now operates in four locations, the others being San Francisco, Chicago and Berkeley Heights, NJ.

Access's geographical and subject-matter breadth greatly helps the company in its core mission, which is to craft value stories from multiple perspectives. To ensure that the resulting messaging

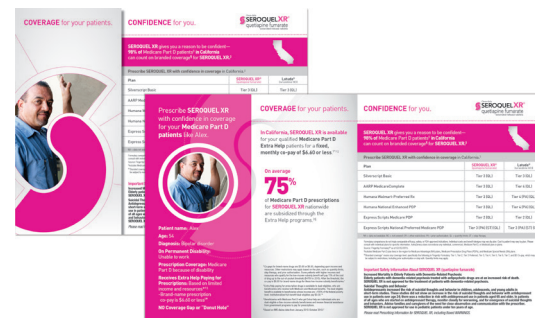
resonates with stakeholders like accountable care organizations, Access leans heavily on clinical-trial and health-outcome data. While other agencies have only recently come around to a similar approach, Access has worked this way for years, according to managing partner Eric Bishea.

He adds that what further distinguishes the company is its discipline: While pharma marketers may hear 10 differing definitions of what constitutes "value," Access employs a formal one that guides its efforts. Clients for which this value-conversation strategy has recently been deployed include medical device firm Covidien.

Of course, the environment in which the company operates has changed quite a bit along the way, particularly for its specialty medication clients. Access partner Kevin Barnett notes that these clients have historically not had to worry about wooing health insurers but are now adopting a new approach in order to address what he describes as "pushback and frustration" over how their drugs are priced.

Other shifts in the way Access goes about business include a need to communicate with a new array of healthcare professionals in the wake of the Affordable Care Act. Partner Leana Wood, who heads up the MedAccess medical communications group, says that so-called health extenders—nurse practitioners, physician's assistants, etc.—similarly need to be educated about a product's value due to the increased attention to cost and reimbursement.

Wood is but one of several members of the Access executive team that previously worked in-house before shifting to the agency world, which she believes confers upon the company a com-



Access ad campaigns for Clenziderm's "Clean acne from the inside out" (above left) and Seroquel's "Confidence" (above)

petitive advantage. "Having had the client-side experience ... you kind of know as an agency where you fit," she explains.

Access managing partner Seth Gordon—a Pfizer alumnus—adds that this commonality of professional heritage renders the company and its people a true resource. "Our clients rely on us to complete projects," he says. "But they also ask for our counsel just based on the fact that we were involved with some fairly large brands and did some cutting-edge work when we were on the pharma side."

—Deborah Weinstein