

**100
AGENCIES**



AT THE HELM

Stephen Piotrowski, managing director

PERFORMANCE

Achieved double-digit growth in its second year of business

HIGHLIGHTS

Inked five new assignments including two from Braintree laboratories and Boston Biomedical

New Genzyme assignments include Kynamro and Thyrogen

CHALLENGES

Establishing client diversification

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

“WE ARE ABLE TO TAP INTO MANAGED MARKETS, CONSUMER, MEDICAL EDUCATION, DIGITAL AND MORE.”

—STEPHEN PIOTROWSKI

H4B BOSTON

A firm finds the only way to grow is up



H4B Boston—which recently shed the Back Bay moniker to reflect its more central location—is shining against the backdrop of a city known for its life-sciences community.

The agency established a strong footprint in the market during 2014. “Our first full year [2013] was more of a start-up-phase mentality,” recalls Stephen Piotrowski, managing director of the Health-4Brands network agency.

Firm leaders expect to repeat the double-digit revenue performance of 2014 this year. “We will continue to aim for double-digit growth until we reach a certain scale,” Piotrowski shares.

The shop signed on five new assignments in 2014, including new business pitch wins from Braintree Laboratories and Boston Biomedical. Julien Jarreau, EVP creative director, is quick to point out that organic growth is an important part of the agency’s top line.

“There’s nothing better than a client awarding you new business based on a previous project’s performance,” says Jarreau, with a nod toward the agency’s biggest client, Genzyme, a Sanofi company. The shop manages the US and global assignments for every rare disease drug in its portfolio.

The newest Genzyme assignments that H4B Boston has picked up include Kynamro for a rare type of high cholesterol called homozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (HoFH); Thyrogen for postoperative thyroid remnant ablation; and olipudase, a protein-based therapy being studied

for the metabolic disease Niemann-Pick Type B.

The team is busy working on a first-in-class oncology stem-cell product for Boston Biomedical, which competes with MacroGenics and Verastem at the chance to bring products targeting cancer stem cells to market.

The agency completed important prelaunch work to drum up awareness about cancer stem cells, Jarreau reports. “We focused on helping oncologists understand the role therapies designed to target stem cells play alongside radiation and chemotherapy,” he says.

“The Boston Biomedical account reinforces our capabilities as a highly specialized agency with broad therapeutic experience in niche categories,” observes Piotrowski. A client like Boston Biomedical is perhaps most interested in a service model that will scale up with them as they grow.

“Clients in different life stages may not want the full resource list, but we can scale our services to fit the need,” Piotrowski states. “We are able to tap into managed markets, consumer, medical education, digital and more.”

Piotrowski has learned that the market is simply different in Boston. “Our clients aren’t just about business,” he explains. “They expect us to have some skin in the game and trust is an important piece of the puzzle.”

The agency lives up to the expectation of giving back outside the office, and then some. “We focus on building a strong culture from a value perspective,” Jarreau shares. “We like to give back.”

The agency’s head count is likely to settle around 25 by year’s end—in no way a large number, but certainly a far cry from the three employees present on the day the agency opened its doors. Fluctu-



Specialty work H4B Boston did in 2014: Gaucher disease (for Genzyme, left) and Seprafilm adhesion barrier (above)

ations have occurred as “we learned along the way that not everyone is built to work in a startup agency,” Piotrowski quips.

Piotrowski is most proud that the agency has recorded zero account losses since its establishment. “That’s a testament to the relationships we’ve built,” he says. “But we need a backup plan. Client diversification, combined with our current work, will get us to our goals.”

—Rebecca Mayer Knutsen