



AT THE HELM
Hensley Evans, president

PERFORMANCE
An “OK” year but didn’t hit growth goal of 25%

HIGHLIGHTS
Working with Big Pharma clients, particularly a cholesterol-lowering effort for Pfizer

Teaming up with Bayer Women’s HealthCare on social media campaign for “50 years of the pill”

Looking to diversify the portfolio with work in the managed care arena

CHALLENGE
Concerned with legal and regulatory fears keeping clients offline

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 171

“Last year, there was a lot of wait-and-see, and clients were looking to cut back on spending”

—Jackie Herr

IMC² Health & Wellness

Shop trying to stay ‘healthy’ with disease awareness programs, managed care

When it comes to healthcare marketing, Hensley Evans is passionate about a lot of things: digital, social media, integration, disease awareness, patient education, wellness programs... just don’t expect her to do TV campaigns anytime soon.

“I just don’t think TV is the way of the future,” asserts Evans, president of IMC² Health & Wellness. “The era of the blockbuster is essentially coming to an end and most Big Pharma strategies seem to be built around acquiring new molecules, so they are going to have to get really good – and really cost-efficient – at launching a greater number of smaller and more-targeted products. TV just doesn’t lend itself to that in any way.”

IMC² has been involved in the health and wellness space for most of its 12-year existence, but it was only about 18 months ago that Health & Wellness was spun off as a separate practice. Evans describes it as “a full-service agency with a digital heritage,” meaning the vast majority of its work (80%) is digital marketing, but that it provides print (15%) and direct mail (5%) whenever clients require it.

IMC² Health & Wellness accounts for around 60% of the revenues of its parent and boasts around 100 client-facing staff. Despite the tough conditions, Evans says 2009 was an “OK” year. And while IMC² didn’t achieve its growth goal of 25%, it did hit all profitability targets for the year.

But 2010 is looking even better. “Last year, there was a lot of wait-and-see, and clients were looking to cut back on spending,” says Evans. “But this year, we are starting to see clients willing to commit. I think it’s going to be a really good year.”

The shop works with many Big Pharma clients but not always in drug promotion. Evans is particularly proud of the “My HeartWise” cholesterol-lowering effort for Pfizer. “It’s unusual for pharma companies to create programs that help people address their disease issues with lifestyle changes, instead of taking a pill,” she says. And while such programs may not directly grow market share for drug brands, Evans says there are other benefits for the client. “If you did manage to cure high cholesterol with this program, you’d have a whole different business model, so sell [the wellness program] instead,” she suggests. “And in the meantime you’d be creating goodwill and demonstrating leadership in the cardiovascular category.”

Evans notes that she is starting to see some clients



Above: A website for the “My HeartWise” cholesterol-lowering program—created for Pfizer, maker of Lipitor

trying to “do some things” in social media, instead of talking about it. “They have a sense of how they might actually connect authentically with their customer base instead of just throwing stuff up on a wall,” she adds.

Evans, who testified at the FDA hearings last November, is frustrated that legal and regulatory fears are keeping many pharma companies out of the online conversation. “It’s a shame that the people who actually have the accurate clinical information, and are regulatorily bound to publish it, cannot do so.”

As for the year ahead, Evans plans to further diversify the Health & Wellness portfolio, and predicts increasing involvement in the managed care arena as well as a continued focus on wellness programs. “Doing things about keeping people healthy,” she confesses, “is a lot more fun.” —James Chase