



AT THE HELM

Anne Devereux, chairman and CEO

PERFORMANCE

"Challenging but ultimately successful"

HIGHLIGHTS

Picked up new business from Ethicon Endo-Surgery, J&J and Pfizer

Conducted survey as part of its "complete customer-centric" bent

Beefed up staff with slew of high-level new hires

Gave new life to an older brand, IV Busulfex

CHALLENGE

Holding onto business following M&As

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LyonHeart

Customer survey gave firm new insight into clients' needs, fuels new direction



In a year characterized by uncertainty in all corners of the business, LyonHeart Communications came up with a novel strategy to figure out what clients wanted: It asked them.

This isn't to say that LyonHeart had been deaf to their cries in the past. Indeed, the agency has long prided itself on what chairman and CEO Anne Devereux calls its "complete customer-centric" bent. But during a tough year for most players up and down the medical marketing food chain—"anything that was a little vulnerable became a lot more vulnerable," Devereux says—LyonHeart decided to delve deeper.

It did so via an extensive survey of the firm's clients, and the numerous learnings fueled much of the thinking and strategizing that followed. While Devereux & Co. weren't surprised that budget restrictions on the client side ranked as the biggest frustration, a few eyebrows were arched upon hearing the comments about reduced field-force effectiveness. Other concerns included easy accessibility to out-of-house (read: agency) expertise and a digital perception gap of sorts.

Overall, the survey impressed upon Devereux the need for more tactical specificity and technosavvy. "It used to be that we could create great, smart messaging and know beyond any doubt that it would be heard,"

she explains. "Now, we can't count on that. I'm not saying the reps aren't working hard, but doctors don't have as much time for them as they used to."

What this means is that organizations like LyonHeart have to adapt on several fronts. "Better understanding of customer behavior is something we've always done, but now we have to do it within the context of the digital world," she continues. "We have to figure out the right customer tools, whether it's an iPhone app or something else."

To that end, LyonHeart beefed up its staff over the last year with a handful of high-level hires. Digital vet Tim McCord joined as EVP/chief digital innovation officer, while Steven Hébert signed on as EVP/executive creative director. The firm also worked with an outside consultant, MIT alum Bruce Epstein, to manage its digital evolution.

"A lot of agencies can do digital, but it's hard to do digital within the constraints of this industry, from a legal/medical/regulatory standpoint," Devereux says. "Our investment in these people paid off. They dramatically increased efficiencies." Owing in part to this, Devereux projects that 60-70% of LyonHeart's work in 2010 will be digital and 30-40% traditional—a reversal of the firm's 2009 ratio.

The publicly owned LyonHeart—part of TBWA\World Health, owned by Omnicom—doesn't disclose revenues or similar data, but Devereux characterizes the last 12 months as challenging but ultimately successful. On the new-business front, the agency picked up assignments from Ethicon Endo-Surgery, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer, occasionally alongside Omnicom siblings with expertise in consumer market-



Above: Journal ads for CellCept (left) and Ethicon-Endo Surgery (right); Top: Part of an ad for Otsuka

ing, CRM and med ed. LyonHeart did lose a piece of business in the wake of the Roche/Genentech merger but maintained strong ties with Wyeth and Pfizer following their pairing.

Asked to identify to a piece of work of which she's especially proud, Devereux points to the agency's efforts on behalf of Otsuka's IV Busulfex, an assignment snared in February 2009. "They recognized the challenges the brand was facing, which is that it was an old brand doctors had seen before, and asked us to tackle that," she says. "We gave it a new execution and a new life. It's always gratifying to have that creative flexibility." —Larry Dobrow

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