

Saatchi & Saatchi Health Communications New York

Leadership changes, FDA hiccups and fewer blockbusters spells out flat year

“As an agency now, we have an agility we didn’t have 10 years ago. We’ve learned to be able to handle it all”

—Dave Marek

Saatchi & Saatchi Health Communications New York changed up its leadership as managing director Dave Marek moved on to a global role, serving as a network-wide point man for the firm’s Sanofi business. In his stead, the shop is being led by a acting managing director Sam Welch, who is president of North American advertising for Publicis Healthcare Communications Group (PHCG), while day-to-day operations are overseen by an executive committee including former creative chief Ed Nathan, who has been named chief ideation officer, and EVP/executive creative directors Dobbi Massey (art) and Martha Crane (copy) along with Jenifer Swaine (HR), Jayne Fanelli (creative services) and managing supervisors Jen Samuels, John Kalimtzis and Jordan Levinson.

Revenue was flat in 2010 as the shop—whose heritage was handling blockbusters along with consumer marketing sibling Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness—transitioned to a more diverse portfolio of accounts, suffered a couple losses and saw a pair of promising brands fail in late-stage clinical trials (2011 is looking stronger, but still challenging, execs say). Headcount was down

by about 30, at 170. Last year it was around 200.

The shop lost the Sanofi Pasteur vaccines business to Newtown, PA-based sibling Saatchi & Saatchi Innovations, which is geographically closer to the client, and lost Amgen/Pfizer’s Enbrel after handling the professional advertising business on that brand for 13 years. Meanwhile, the firm’s assignment on Certriad, the Abbott/AstraZeneca cholesterol combo, evaporated in the wake of an FDA complete response letter. Then an experimental Sanofi Oncology drug for breast cancer, iniparib, that the agency had the assignment for fell short in clinical trials and was scratched.

On the win side of the ledger were Sanofi’s oral MS drug teriflunomide and Ferrlecit, for iron deficiency; the US and global assignment for Abbott Diabetes Care’s glucometers and Merck/Ariad’s promising soft tissue and bone cancer treatment ridaforolimus, which made waves at ASCO last month.

Given its legacy as a big brand launch shop, the shift toward smaller specialty brands has hurt, but Nathan says their experience in lifecycle management gives them an edge as they take on a more diverse portfolio.

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“We historically had a great big book of business with blockbusters, with growth brands,” says Nathan. “And now, given what’s happened to the industry where there’s more attention being put into late lifecycle brands and there’s always a lot of launch activity, we have the experience to do extremely well with any brand at any point in its lifecycle.”

Recent launches include those of Sanofi’s Jevtana, for prostate cancer, which the shop is helping to roll out globally; and Sanofi’s Oforta oral leukemia drug. The shop is gearing up for the launch of ridaforolimus and another cancer agent.

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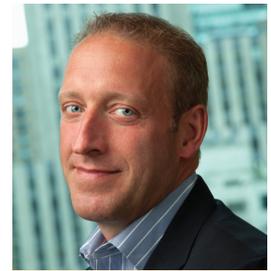
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Left: A launch ad for Sanofi's Jevtana, to treat people with prostate cancer that has worsened after treatment with other anti-cancer medicines; below: A mobile app to calculate the correct pediatric dosing of Boehringer Ingelheim's Aptivus; far left: A journal ad for AstraZeneca's Nexium, to treat GERD



AT THE HELM

Sam Welch, acting managing director

PERFORMANCE

Revenue was flat in 2010, 2011 is looking better but still "challenging"

HIGHLIGHTS

Won Sanofi oral MS business for teriflunomide and Ferrlecit for iron deficiency; US and global work for Abbott Diabetes Care's glucometers; and Merck/Ariad's soft tissue and bone cancer treatment ridaforolimus

Recent launches: Sanofi's Jevtana, for prostate cancer, and Oforta, an oral leukemia drug

Digital, relationship marketing and analytics work has doubled and now consists of 30-35% of the shop's work

Changed leadership to an executive committee consisting of Ed Nathan, Dobbi Massey, Martha Crane, Jenifer Swaine, Jayne Fanelli, Jen Samuels, John Kalimtzis and Jordan Levinson

CHALLENGES

Lost several accounts because of FDA issues, clinical trials and one to a sibling shop because of its closer proximity

Coming ahead after transitioning

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 169

Saatchi & Saatchi New York's top client is Sanofi, for which the firm handles professional assignments on aflibercept, Eligard, Elitek, Eloxatin, Ferrlecit, Hyalgan, Jevtana, teriflunomide and a couple undisclosed brands. Other big clients include: Abbott Diabetes Care, for FreeStyle glucometers; AstraZeneca for Crestor, Nexium and Seroquel; Merck for Proventil and ridaforolimus; and Takeda for Amitiza.

Around 30%-35% of the shop's work is now comprised of digital, relationship marketing and analytics—double what it was a few years ago—the remainder being made up of traditional professional advertising and strategic services.

"We've been doing a lot of relationship marketing, especially for brands that don't have a lot of sales support these days," says Massey. That's a point of pride for the agency, which two years ago made a conscious decision not to outsource digital production.

"We've always been very strong at doing insight-driven strategies based on the psychological consumer model," adds Nathan, "partly because of our proximity to Saatchi & Saatchi Wellness. And we've built on that in the last three years as we've gotten more involved in RM programs. I think our investment in the kinds of disciplines you need for digital and RM, like user experience and analytics, and then having married them to what has always been a very strong insight- and analytics-driven process

gives us the richest approach."

The shop has hired staff to add expertise in data visualization and user experience while building up its channel planning capability in recent years. In addition, PHCG has established a centralized strategy and analytics group that works across PHCG agencies.

The New York firm is putting on "strategic summits," two-day workshops for clients at "defining moments"—competitor entries, loss of an indication, new data, safety crises—with leaner marketing staffs handling heavier workloads.

"Increasingly, brands need this kind of extra support as their day jobs are all-consuming, so they don't find the extra bandwidth to anticipate the next crisis, challenge or opportunity," says Nathan.

The agency's New York office got a name tweak as part of a network-wide branding revamp that imparted an "elegant, understated" black and white visual identity on the company's global operations. Saatchi & Saatchi runs 10 health-care agencies worldwide, including the three US shops.

"The agency has come through a lot of transitions and is poised to make the next leap forward," says Nathan. "We have more diversity in terms of size and lifecycle, and we're rather uniquely suited to that."

"As an agency now, we have an agility we didn't have 10 years ago," adds Crane. "We've learned to be able to handle it all."

—Matthew Arnold

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50 in	62 lbs
51 in	63 lbs
52 in	64 lbs
53 in	65 lbs
54 in	66 lbs

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