



AT THE HELM
Peter Labadie, CEO

PERFORMANCE
Revenue was flat

HIGHLIGHTS
Landed eight new wins, including Astellas' Vaprisol, APP's Naropin, a relaunch for Nordion, Dentsply's Tulsa Dental Specialties division and new corporate identity work for JCL Bioassay

Regained Blink Tears from Abbott Medical Optics

Reabsorbed business from Scientific Voice, brings headcount up to 55

CHALLENGES
Dealing with clients spending less; patent expirys

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

"I don't see clients doing much print. You have to be where the consumer is—computers, the web, the phone"

—Peter Labadie

Williams-Labadie

Eight wins, but tighter budgets spell out flat year for Chicago firm



It was a good year for new business at Williams-Labadie. The Chicago-based Publicis Healthcare Communications Group agency pulled in eight new wins. CEO Peter Labadie is pleased, but revenue remained flat.

"We're not losing business—people are spending less," he says. "The market has turned around to a degree. People aren't in panic mode as they were in late 2008 and 2009, but there's still uncertainty due to all the new healthcare legislation and the new degrees of FDA oversight. In general, companies have gotten a lot smarter about how they spend. They're more concerned about accountability and analytics. The days of hoping something works are over. You can't put programs out and say: 'Let's see if it works.' Publicis gives us very strong analytics capability, which helps."

Other industry challenges include patent expiration, consolidation to bolster pipelines, and shrinking—or nonexistent—sales forces. The agency has become much more focused on digital and relationship management work to meet client needs, and Labadie sees strategy playing a much bigger role than it did four or five years ago. "Creativity isn't just about art and copy anymore," he says.

"Now it's about how smart overall multichannel programs are in reaching and impacting your targeted audience."

Many clients are looking for alternatives to the traditional ways of selling. One client, which doesn't even have a sales force, has expanded an agency program because Labadie says its leaders see they can afford to reach audiences without hiring a sales force. "There's a fear that if you continue to reduce your sales force you're going to somehow lose in the market," he explains.

"We have to find tools that reach people cost effectively. Clients are looking at everything from mobile to e-details to contract sales organizations. When you remove daily sales coverage you need to look at the entire waterfront of different programs to reach people, and you need it to be measurable. It's going to get more and more detailed."

Among last year's wins were Vaprisol (for hyponatremia), awarded by long-time client Astellas, and anesthetic Naropin from APP Pharmaceuticals. Other wins included arthroscopic sports medicine tools from ConMed Linvatec; a North American relaunch of Nordion's liver cancer treatment TheraSphere; and work for Dentsply's Tulsa Dental Specialties division. The agency also regained Blink Tears from Abbott Medical Optics; landed work from Sunesis on a leukemia product in development (Vosaroxin); and picked up a new corporate identity assignment from JCL Bioassay.

Hollister, a hospital products client, was lost after



Above: An interactive site for Astellas' Lexiscan; Top: Packaging for Abbott's RevitaLens OcuTec

a management change. A product from SciClone also fell by the wayside after failing late-stage trials.

When the agency merged into Publicis in 2007, its speaker management business was transferred to Publicis' Scientific Voice, which was shuttered ending 2010. Williams-Labadie reabsorbed that business and 12 to 15 people, bringing total headcount up to about 55.

This year is shaping up nicely. The agency is ahead of forecast, and Labadie hopes to close the year ahead.

"We're going to grow by being more digital," he says. "I don't see clients doing much print in the future. You have to be where the consumer is—computers, the web, the phone." —Tanya Lewis