



AT THE HELM

From left: Kevin Dunn (SVP, global strategic planning), Anne Stroup (managing director, health and wellness), Anthony Rotolo (chief creative officer, health and wellness)

PERFORMANCE

Capitalized on company's traditional strengths in data and analytics

HIGHLIGHTS

Preparing for a major repositioning effort set to roll out in the last quarter of this year

CHALLENGES

Heading off growing pains for the agency's new model

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“We’ll be coming to market with something new and different”

—Anne Stroup

The Agency Inside Harte-Hanks

Repositioning to make the most of a relationship-marketing legacy

An agency that’s in the middle of an information-sensitive period of transition isn’t one of the easiest subject to write about.

“We’re kind of retooling our model,” is how Anne Stroup, managing director, health and wellness, puts it. “We’ll be coming to market with something new and different, something we think will help us capitalize on all the changes in the worlds of pharma and health and wellness.”

Adds Anthony Rotolo, the agency’s chief creative officer, health and wellness: “The model is unique in that it offers traditional AOR brand offerings as well as the specialty and discipline of relationship marketing. But we’re not just colliding those two things. We’re taking the best practices and melding them together.”

Obviously the tweaks to the firm’s approach—as well as the benefits that come with them—will become more clear when The Agency Inside formally unveils them in a few months. Nonetheless, as broadly outlined by Stroup and Rotolo, the potential changes make a world of sense, especially given the relationship-marketing heritage of parent company Harte-Hanks—which has only been in that business since 1923 or so.

“It’s all about the traditional strengths of the Harte-Hanks organization: data and analytics, which play such a huge role in today’s marketing environment. Clearly that’s a legacy we embrace,” Stroup explains. Asked whether all this history gives The Agency Inside

more credibility in the eyes of current and potential clients, Stroup makes it clear that she thinks it does. “It brings a validity to our offering that other agencies, especially the traditional brand shops, can’t match. They don’t have the history of performance in data and analytics.”

When asked why The Agency Inside chose this point in time—as opposed to, say, two years ago or two years from now—to institute the changes, Stroup responds by mentioning a pretty powerful motivating factor. The changes, she says, were precipitated by market forces. “Dollars aren’t being spent on sales forces anymore, because sales forces aren’t making the inroads with physicians they used to,” she notes. “So it’s relationship marketing and digital, which we believe go hand in hand, that are now most important to pharma brand managers. Five years ago, they were secondary services.”

The question remains how staffers inside The Agency Inside will respond to the new model, but Rotolo downplays the potential for growing pains or any related headaches. “Traditional agencies are incorporating digital and analytics, but companies



Establishing relationships: For Alcon/CIBA Vision, the e-mail-messaging-based EyeFile program

and cultures that have been doing things one way for a long time are sometimes a little resistant to change,” he says. “I think it’s easier for us, because we’re coming from the other side. We already have that solid ROI foundation.”

The organization will retain the Agency Inside moniker/identity, though there is new branding that’s set to make its debut along with the other changes. Stroup and Rotolo decline to say whether the firm will expand head count, though Rotolo expects a “refinement of staff” that will ultimately result in a more broadly skilled roster. Too, The Agency Inside will make a little noise. “Next year at this time, you will know about us. We have been corporately funded to build this model and make a dramatic impact on this market,” Stroup promises. —Larry Dobrow



For contact details, rosters, wins, losses, billings and creative samples of more than 130 firms see our Agency A-to-Z, pages 181 to 219