



AT THE HELM

From left: Roger Haskins, Chuck Wagner, Nina Manasan Greenberg, Andrew Gottfried

PERFORMANCE

Pulled in new business from several sources

HIGHLIGHTS

Breaking the 100-employee barrier

Becoming the agency partner for the Novo Nordisk Managed Markets marketing group

CHALLENGES

Maintaining company culture in the face of growth

Nudging clients toward digital

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 181

Entrée Health

Crossing a major threshold with an eye on maintaining company culture



Entrée Health, isn't really in the business of tracking and celebrating milestones. But when the appeal and necessity of its primary offering sparked a huge growth spurt over the last year, the firm found that a single number was staring it in the face: 100.

At this time last year, Entrée counted fewer than 100 employees under its roof. As of late May, the agency had grown head count to the extent that managing partner Nina Manasan Greenberg wasn't certain of the exact figure.

"The cheesiest way to answer is that we were under 100 then and we're significantly over now," she says. Still, Greenberg and the rest of the Entrée leadership team approached the surge into triple digits warily, especially after execs at other agencies warned them to "be careful about 100."

"On some level, it's just an arbitrary number, but it's also a number that says growth is happening in ways you haven't seen it before," Greenberg explains. "It's easy to take your eyes off the company culture, which is a big part of what got you there in the first place."

Maintaining that agency culture — Greenberg has been known to say, affectionately, that Entrée staffers "have a certain geekiness about them" — proved among the biggest challenges the firm faced and overcame

during the last 12 months. "There's nothing about the 101st employee that changed our environment at all," managing partner Chuck Wagner says proudly. He attributes this to a range of factors, many related to the space in which Entrée plies its trade (access and reimbursement communications).

While demand from clients for such services has surged in recent years, Entrée has resisted the temptation to serve them using whoever's available at a given moment. Unlike most other agencies, it doesn't have an army of freelancers on speed-dial. "We try not to freelance this work out, because it's not something that anyone can do," Wagner notes. "We could probably do the same amount of revenue with 50% fewer full-time people, but we don't. That's just not the best way to do it for our clients."

But while these clients are keen to avail themselves of Entrée's access and reimbursement expertise, sometimes they need a little nudge. Greenberg describes this less as a frustration and more as something that comes with the territory. "Maybe [some clients in this space] were a little slow to embrace digital," she acknowledges. "But rumors to the contrary notwithstanding, digital tactics work extremely well with them when you speak their language and meet them on their terms." Wagner agrees, adding, "The overwhelming majority of linguistic expressions used to communicate access and reimbursement are used the wrong way. There's a misalignment as to what's important to people in this space."

Judging by the firm's new-business record over the course of the last year, Entrée has figured out a

"There's a misalignment as to what's important to people in this space"

—Nina Manasan Greenberg



Entrée Health's 2011 projects included work for (from left) FluMist, Novo Nordisk and Lucentis

way to connect those dots. Optimizer Pharmaceuticals hired the firm for work around the launch of Difcidid, a diarrhea drug. Novo Nordisk, which had previously worked with Entrée on a host of projects, formalized the relationship: Entrée is now the agency partner for the Novo Nordisk Managed Markets marketing group. Other clients who expanded Entrée's charge include Baxter, Alcon Pharmaceuticals, Amarin Corp. and Genentech.

"Our motto is that it's all about client love," Wagner says. "It's all about making sure the clients feel our immediate presence and our commitment to their business." —Larry Dobrow