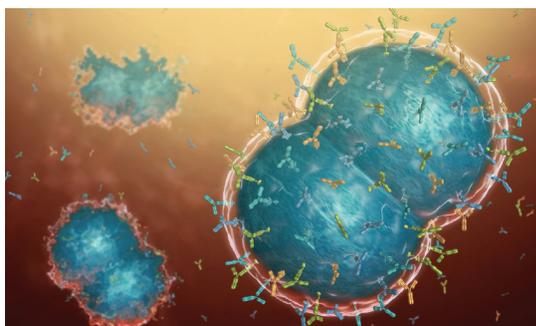


ghg

Digital focus and a diverse roster gave WPP agency a big boost in 2011



“We’ve always had a vision of being a cross-platform communications agency”

—Lynn O’Connor Vos

Going back several years, WPP agency ghg has been building and training fully integrated, cross-platform teams to help clients succeed amid evolving healthcare industry dynamics. CEO Lynn O’Connor Vos calls 2011 a true “landmark” year, reporting double-digit growth and noting the agency has experienced four years of consistent growth.

“We set high goals financially and we achieved them,” Vos says. “We won a Global Burke Award from Johnson & Johnson in the healthcare access category on behalf of Janssen Connect. We moved some of our larger clients to doing robust digital work, including blogging and social media. We invested in great talent and we’re driving home the integrated model.”

Managing partner, director of brand strategies John Dietz notes that as clients are recognizing the need for synchronized communications, ghg has been “right there waiting for them with solutions.”

Scope of work has expanded and the client base has diversified across categories including OTC brands, devices, and health advocacy. Last year was big in terms

of expanding work in animal health, as the Kansas City office was instrumental in landing global AOR for Bayer Animal Health. Vos is pleased, noting animal health is a \$72 billion market with opportunities in all countries.

The agency also won some big accounts as part of multidisciplinary WPP teams—an AOR assignment for a Johnson & Johnson immunology launch as part of “Team Chemistry,” and ghg’s Healxx Digital won a consumer, patient and digital AOR assignment for Bayer Women’s Health as part of “Team Satellite.”

Other wins included expanded work with Bayer Oncology, consumer AOR for a diabetes diagnostic brand consumer launch, and professional AOR for a Medtronic device launch. The Kansas City office was awarded an assignment on behalf of a surgical scrub product, and ghg units Phase Five, IMsci, and Darwin Healthcare landed multiple medical education accounts.

Headcount ending 2011 was up 75 to more than 600. Vos says finding people with deep multichannel and integrated experience who can work well on WPP team accounts can be a challenge, though she adds that the agency really hasn’t had any trouble finding good people. New hires are coming from a variety of places—consumer shops, digital shops, and traditional professional shops—and Vos adds that there are many more scientists on staff now than in the past.

“We’re actively looking for people who haven’t spent their lives just doing professional marketing,” Vos explains. “We’re striving to narrow the gap between professional and consumer marketing. Our team is very consumer oriented.”

Increasing client service levels was a priority last year, as Vos says clients want direct involvement with highly experienced senior-level people. New hires joining to drive big team business were Paul Giroux EVP, managing partner and Dan Goldberg, MD, EVP for the Johnson & Johnson franchise. Other senior additions included managing partner Mike Hudnall; EVP, chief creative officer John Canevari; and Robb DeFillipis, SVP, director of global operations.

Dietz notes finding the right employees who can “function as high-performing teams” in a cross platform environment isn’t always easy. “For some who come from the traditional advertising side, it’s been a challenge,” he says. “It’s forced us to bring in new thinkers like John Canevari.”

Canevari explains it’s key to find people who can extend thinking across numerous channels. “We want people who not only have the skill sets but who also can think about how message and strategy translate within the expanse of those channels,” he adds.

The agency brought in quite a bit of strong digital talent last year, including Megan Fabry, VP, director of interactive strategy and Justin Reed, VP, interactive creative director. In Kansas City, Laura Shown was hired as VP, digital strategy, and Julian Parreno, joined as VP account director to help develop the human health offering.

Managing partner, chief engagement officer Erin

Above: A promotion for the Helen Keller National Center for Deaf-Blind Youths and Adults

Byrne reports there's some digital component to nearly every client assignment.

"We've always had a vision of being a cross platform communications agency, and it takes a digitally driven approach," she says. "We have the vision to understand the patient journey and the professional journey using a product we call 'digital diagnosis' that

ghg's Hurd Studios depicts the Bexsero antigen (opposite page); a Janssen Connect ad (above)

helps us understand what each audience does online, what they trust, what action they take based on that experience, and how that impacts the patient/physician relationship, which is obviously evolving as patients become more empowered and engaged"

Byrne adds that an internal initiative called "ghg Forward," which launched in 2010 to infuse digital knowledge and a "spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation" across the agency, expanded into a client facing program in 2011.

"As clients become more aware that they have to participate in social media—because the conversa-

tion is happening there whether or not they do—and that social media is impacting their integrated strategy, we want to educate them so they understand the implications and are more comfortable engaging," Byrne explains. "We're doing it with events where we bring multiple clients together at ghg and with day-long events for individual clients at their offices or at technology partners like Google."

The executive management team feels the agency is well-positioned to help clients face all challenges, including the rise of specialty markets, cost and managed care pressures, the need to show improved outcomes, consumer-centricity, generic competition, and general pharma trust issues.

"The most exciting thing about joining ghg is how forward thinking it is," says Hudnall, MP, accounts. "We're changing the model of what we're selling away from just advertising to include programs that help patients and customers and build business. It's a real change in what an agency does. It's elevating the level of strategic partnership and expanding the programs we deliver. Technology is a huge part of that."

Vos cites work for Text4baby, Think About Your Eyes and Janssen Connect as highlights and examples of innovation. "All three examples demonstrate that we're absolutely looking at new ways of marketing for the healthcare business, whether it's a new business model, galvanizing a population of public and private partners, or delivering messaging in a very precise way," she says. "We're really looking to help clients be much more effective with their communications."

Focus on expanding reach into cross-platform campaigns and on improving health outcomes will continue. Driving mobile innovation for both HCP and consumer audiences a priority for Vos, who notes a campaign that includes delivering text messages for oncology patients launched in May 2012.

Additional plans this year include expanding in Asia and expanding London's WG access group into a consulting office in New York.

"In Europe, WG has been the most successful division we've had in terms of growth in the past five years," Vos says. "Establishing value prior to launch and disseminating that information to KOLs and other opinion leaders is a big struggle for pharma companies. [WG] fills a huge need and represents huge opportunity." — *Tanya Lewis*



PERFORMANCE

Lynn O'Connor Vos, CEO

PERFORMANCE

A "landmark" year, with double-digit growth

Headcount went up by 75 people, to more than 600

HIGHLIGHTS

Won several big assignments from, among others, Johnson & Johnson and Bayer Women's Health

Made increasing client service levels a priority

Executed innovative work for Text4baby, Think About Your Eyes and Janssen Connect

Invested in bolstering digital service by bringing in several high-powered executive hires

"ghg Forward" initiative to bring digital knowledge and "a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation" across all parts of the company

CHALLENGES

Finding employees whose skills extend across the agency's numerous channels

Dealing with the rise of specialty markets and the need to show improved outcomes

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