



AT THE HELM

Ahnal Purohit, president and CEO

PERFORMANCE

Revenue was up between 10% and 15% in 2011

HIGHLIGHTS

Fifteen new accounts last year included Halozyme, Novartis and Promius Pharma

Won multiple awards, given for work done for Cloderm and BD Medical-Pharmaceutical Systems, among others

CHALLENGES

Working with the changes in client/agency relationships

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

Purohit Navigation

Increased work in diagnostics helps Chicago firm make solid gains



Purohit Navigation president and CEO Ahnal Purohit, PhD, reports revenue was up between 10% and 15% last year. She says the need to stretch client dollars is an ongoing challenge, as is the need to stay ahead of the curve in understanding the rapidly evolving specialty market.

While the agency still has a lot of pharma business, work with diagnostics is increasing. Several of the 15 new accounts won last year are great examples of new and unique diagnostic products, including Halozyme's Hylenex (recombinant hyaluronidase), for which the agency won AOR status. AOR wins also came in for Novartis Diagnostics' Procleix Panther System and for Promius Pharma's topical steroid Cloderm.

"Diagnostic companies are becoming more sophisticated," Purohit says. "We like the diagnostic space because the technology for individualized medicine really can come only through these kinds of diagnostic companies, and these therapies are becoming a key driver in the specialty arena."

"In addition, diagnostic technology is getting better and these companies are becoming more market savvy," she continues. "There are so many standalone specialty diagnostics that are, and will be, available and relied upon. Molecular testing, susceptibility testing, predictive and prognostic testing are all becoming key

players in specialty healthcare. It's much more difficult to market and to understand diagnostic technology, frankly, than any pharma product I've worked with. But the more we understand diagnostics, the more we're better able to also help our pharma-side partners."

The agency won multiple awards, including ones for work on Cloderm and BD Medical-Pharmaceutical Systems' BD MAX System (molecular testing), a project account won last year. BD Medical-Pharmaceutical Systems also awarded project work on lab instrumentation platform BD Bruker.

Additional new project assignments were awarded from Baxter Medical Delivery; Eloquest Healthcare (for wound care products Mastisol and Microcyn); Genzyme (promotional education work); McKesson's medical surgical division; Omnicell (market research); and Onset Dermatologics (market research/new business strategy). The agency also won corporate-strategy work and test-market work for a menopause product from Ferndale Pharma Group. Phenogen Sciences' BREVAGen account was resigned.

Purohit says digital work is up overall and is an important component of all campaigns. "The ratio of digital for all campaigns is also increasing," she adds.

Headcount remained stable at about 45. "My core team is very solid—several of them have been with me more than 20 years," Purohit says. "We hired a few very strong account services people. You want to find like-minded people, and that's always a challenge. When we find someone who fits we hire them."

In terms of industry trends, Purohit notices shifts in client/agency relationships.



Work for (from left) Promiseb topical cream, BD Medical-Pharmaceutical Systems and Mastisol

"With larger pharma companies, the agency dynamic is changing," according to Purohit. "Generally, you don't see the strong bond. I think the model of network agencies with larger pharma companies is being questioned—I certainly hear more about it now from product managers than I did a year and a half ago. The market is increasingly migrating towards specialty brands with specialty audiences that require a deeper level of time, understanding and specialization. This requires product managers, and agencies, to think very differently than they do for more generalized markets. It also demands a higher level of partnership overall." — *Tanya Lewis*

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