



**AT THE HELM**

Adrienne Lee, executive managing director; Larry Lannino, general manager

**PERFORMANCE**

Clients “responded strongly” to Beacon’s approach over the past year

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Hired by EMD Serono as managed markets group AOR

Added work from Bayer and rEVO Biologics

Opened a “service office” in Orange County

**CHALLENGES**

Changing the way the agency is viewed

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 187

# Beacon Healthcare Communications

Attracting clients by taking a “holistic approach to engagement”



Beacon Healthcare Communications general manager Larry Lannino says he can’t help but notice how many of the résumés on his desk have been sent by current employees of large network agencies. At the same time, owing both to his belief in Beacon’s model and his recent professional experience, he isn’t the slightest bit taken aback by this.

“What we’re finding is that being independent is actually a drawing card,” he says. “The standard network offering is only as strong as the weakest link, because not every agency in the offering is a member of the ‘A’ team. Sometimes you get really good agencies working alongside not-so-good agencies.” He also notes that individuals within the network system aren’t necessarily taken with the model. “There’s lots of disillusionment. There’s lots of politics involved.”

Lannino knows of what he speaks: his last two gigs before joining Beacon in December were at the DDB-owned DDB Remedy and at the WPP-owned Sudler & Hennessey. And now that he’s been charged with leading Beacon into its second decade, he’s determined to marry what he sees as the best network qualities with those that have served Beacon so well for the last

ten years (specifically, its independent-mindedness). Those qualities are likely to underpin Beacon’s self-branding campaign, which will debut in the late summer or early fall. While it remains very much a work in progress, Lannino allows that it will feature “a more dynamic look and a revamped strategic process. It will change the way we’re viewed externally.”

Key to that revamped process will be an engage-at-all-costs mentality. “If you engage with the appropriate customer at the appropriate time with an appropriate message, you’re going to win,” Lannino explains. By way of example, he envisions a scenario in which a client RFP calls for a professional launch campaign. “We’re obviously going to approach it from that perspective, but we’ll look at how consumers will interact with that professional and we’ll look at the payer side. It’s a holistic approach to engagement.”

Starting with Lannino’s hiring, Beacon made several moves over the last year to put it in position to execute such an approach. To accommodate the agency’s growing number of clients based on the West Coast, it opened what Lannino calls a “service office” in Orange County. “It’s about having boots on the ground. We’ll still be doing most of the creative here [in Bedminster, NJ],” Lannino says. The challenge, he adds, was less about finding the right people to staff the new office than about choosing the right area in which to locate it. “You’ve got a number of companies between San Diego and San Francisco. Orange County seemed the best fit.”



**Work for rEVO Biologics’ ATRYN (above left) and Daiichi Sankyo’s eResources4Health (above)**

Geographic conundrums notwithstanding, clients responded strongly to the Beacon approach during the last year. EMD Serono hired the firm as AOR for its managed markets group as well as for a rebranding assignment. Bayer tapped the firm for work on a host of hemophilia products, while longtime client rEVO Biologics added work on its hematology franchise. Factor in Beacon’s enhanced ability to service clients worldwide via its affiliation with international agency network thenetworkone, and the agency finds itself in prime position to build on recent gains.

“Next year, I hope we’ll be talking about the challenge of managing growth within the agency itself,” Lannino says. —Larry Dobrow

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—Larry Lannino