



## AT THE HELM

Alyson Connor (president) and Phil Stein (CEO)

## PERFORMANCE

Revenues hit \$10.3 million—nearly a 20% increase over 2011's numbers

## HIGHLIGHTS

Formation of the Health Behavior Group and a medical communications practice

New working relationships with Amgen, Onyx Pharmaceuticals and Merz Pharmaceuticals

## CHALLENGES

Lost Gamunex following a management change at Grifols

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

**"Behavioral science has been central to our work for clients for many years"**

—Alyson Connor

# MicroMass Communications

Clear leadership and vision put Cary, NC, agency on a positive path



**M**icroMass had a good year in 2012. After a flat 2011, revenue for the Cary, NC-headquartered firm rose to \$10.3 million—very close to the goal of a 20% increase.

The agency's partnership model, instated in 2011 when COO Jeff Burkel, EVP Alyson Connor and CFO Phil Stein all became partners, shifted a bit after Burkel left last year to pursue other interests. Connor became president, and Stein became CEO. They say the change wasn't disruptive.

"We have clear leadership and a clear mission aligned solidly around our behavioral-based approach," Connor says.

One of the biggest highlights of last year was the formal establishment of the Health Behavior Group, led by 12-year MicroMass veteran Jessica Brueggeman.

"The Health Behavior Group is our strategic consulting offering," Connor says. "Behavioral science has been central to our work for clients for many years, but we hadn't made a concerted effort to market it and establish it as a separate offering."

The group created a proprietary platform called the Patient Value Framework for long-time client GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), which Connor says wanted to more deeply commit to its patient-centric approach. Through the platform the agency expanded its relationship with

GSK, which is using it to build behavior-change capability, promote patient centricity and align materials used with external customers.

"The Patient Value Framework is applied from molecule to market," Connor explains. "It's an enterprise approach. We did a lot of research and came up with a model of how GSK needs to move forward on all fronts—from R&D to consumer marketing to managed care—and created a platform for driving patient engagement, which leads to better outcomes."

A medical communications practice was also formed. Stein notes that as pharma companies in general have shifted focus to patients, it's important for MicroMass to help them apply a patient-centered approach to medical communications.

The agency's consumer AOR relationship with United Therapeutics expanded last year to include patient HCP and medical communications work.

Quite a few new client relationships began as well. Amgen awarded a patient-relationship marketing AOR assignment on Xgeva (cancer-related bone metastases). The agency also won project work on Onyx Pharmaceuticals' support program for cancer patients and caregivers called Onyx 360, and HCP facing project work on Merz Pharmaceuticals' Zeomin (cervical dystonia and blepharospasm).

Grifols' Gamunex (PI, ITP, and CIDP) was lost after an internal management change.



**Digital work for Nexafed (left) and an ad for Tyvaso (above) display the agency's versatility**

Total number of staff across the Cary and Chicago offices dipped two to 63 last year. There are 67 now with five openings. "The key is hiring people with pharma knowledge who are open to a different approach where the focus is on the consumer," Stein notes.

It looks like 2013 will be another good year for the agency, which has won patient-facing project work on ViiV's HIV treatment Dolutegravir. Stein says there are more new business opportunities pending, and he's expecting another 20% bump in revenue this year.

"We've been talking to clients about the ideas of patient centricity and patient engagement for the last 19 years, and we're very pleased that in the last 12 to 18 months it has finally taken hold," Connor says.

—Tanya Lewis