



AT THE HELM

Mike Myers, president

PERFORMANCE

A “pretty strong” 2012, with things trending upward in 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

Wins from Baylor College of Medicine, Boehringer Ingelheim and Duchesnay

Expanded business from Gilead, Health-Tronics and Merck

Started a pro bono relationship with the National Baseball Hall of Fame

CHALLENGES

Lost work from several clients

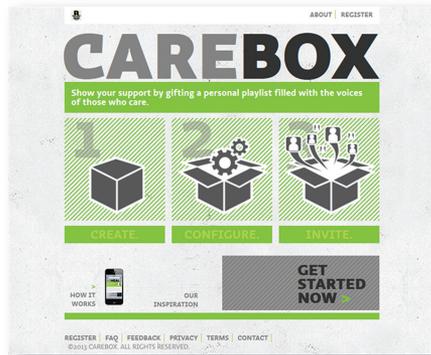
For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 187

“We’ve started ideating differently. It’s had a transformative effect”

—Mike Myers

Palio+ Ignite

An “integration of equals” results in an agency with a big menu of skills



Plans were underway last summer to merge inVentiv Health siblings Palio and Ignite Health. The union was made official early this year.

“It was an integration of equals,” says former Palio president and co-founder Mike Myers, who took the helm as president of Palio+Ignite. “Palio was built as a traditional shop, known for outstanding creative work driven from strategic insight. Ignite has always been on the leading edge of digital work and innovation. Palio had digital work, but we needed to become more digital, and any agency can benefit from innovation. Ignite needed some of the capabilities and skills Palio had as a general agency. It’s a very complementary fit.”

Myers reported last year that 2011 was Palio’s best ever in terms of revenue, while Ignite reported its previously explosive growth had slowed to about 9% in 2011.

Former Ignite president Matt Brown left last summer. Myers says Ignite co-founder Fabio Gratton is serving in an advisory role this summer before he sets off on an around-the-world adventure.

Naturally, the integration has required some adjustment. Forming a core leadership team across the Saratoga Springs, Irvine and Manhattan offices—comprised of members of both former agencies—has helped.

“When you put any two things together, whether it’s a husband and wife or two companies, you’re going to run into challenges,” Myers says. “You have to focus on listening, paying attention and doing right by employees and clients. There has to be some setting ego aside and getting to know each other. It’s got to be an integration about what’s best for the evolved entity.”

Ignite’s media group was shed, but those employees moved into inVentiv’s overall media group. Total Palio+Ignite headcount is now 191.

Myers won’t talk revenue, but the marriage is evidently proving fruitful, as he says more business was won in the first four-and-a-half months of 2013 than was won in all of 2012. And 2012 appears to have been pretty strong on the new business front.

Last year’s wins included digital, print and radio work for Baylor College of Medicine and for Maimonides Medical Center; managed market work on multiple Boehringer Ingelheim brands; and consumer, professional and digital AOR status for Duchesnay’s Diclegis (morning sickness). Business expanded with existing clients Gilead Sciences, HealthTronics and Merck.

A pro bono relationship began with the National Baseball Hall of Fame. The agency won’t shift its focus from healthcare, but Myers says the account, which includes social media work, is fun and beneficial for staff because it allows for creative thinking outside of FDA confines.

Business was lost with Genentech, NPS, Oncogenex and Satellite Healthcare. Myers says the work was mostly completed digital projects. Work on Biogen’s



Work for (from left) Carebox, an app that lets users create personal playlists of support messages that can be sent to people going through difficult times; and Maimonides Medical Center

Pegifn went to inVentiv sibling GSW, and ADHD treatment Quillivant was lost after Pfizer acquired it.

Mobile, digital and managed care groups are continuing to grow. Myers also notes increasing integration across all media channels.

Synergy between the two agencies is driving new ways of thinking and new types of innovation.

“Given the two different historical approaches we’ve taken to engaging clients, we’ve started ideating differently,” Myers says. “It’s had a transformative effect on our work. We’re coming up with different solutions than we used to.” —Tanya Lewis