



AT THE HELM

J.D. Cassidy, managing director

PERFORMANCE

Rough year, with revenues and headcount down

HIGHLIGHTS

Agency scored wins from Novartis and Valeant

Launched Sanofi/Regeneron's Zaltrap globally

Executive hires point the agency toward getting back "ahead of the curve"

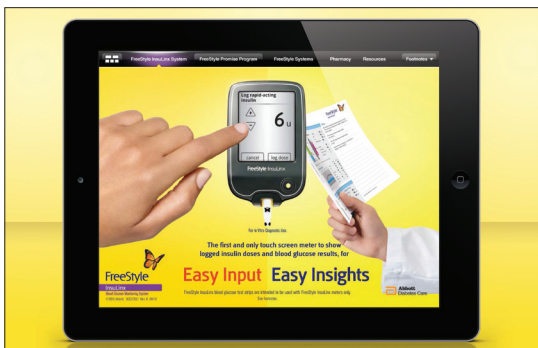
CHALLENGES

Lost a few accounts; others saw shrinkage

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

Saatchi & Saatchi Healthcare Communications NY

Caught out amid industry changes, a venerable professional shop rebuilds



Saatchi & Saatchi Health Communications New York is under new management and in the process of reinvention after a tough 2012 that saw the shop's headcount cut in half.

"Our heritage and legacy has been large global branding assignments, major launch experience across therapeutic categories," says managing director J. D. Cassidy, who joined the shop from Philly indie boutique DiD last October. "We want to retain that but at the same time contemporize our offering. We see ourselves as a creative professional agency that's fueled by actionable insights as well as deep analytics and multichannel capabilities."

Buffeted by the demise of the blockbuster and the traditional channels that supported it, the shop shrank dramatically, from more than 200 employees in 2010 to 65. With new leadership in place and an updated offering, Cassidy says things have begun to turn around.

In addition to Cassidy, who filled a void left when Anders Ekman resigned early last summer, the shop brought on Steve Hebert from CementBloc as executive creative director, Kristin Volk from GSW as chief strategy officer and Hensley Evans, who serves as digital and analytics czar for both Saatchi Health and its consumer sibling Saatchi Wellness (Cassidy spent years at Digitas). The agency also named two

top account leads: Julie Bower, from NeON, heads up the company's Pfizer business, and Melissa Sturno, a longtime BMS exec, leads the shop's oncology practice. Those hires have helped the shop catch up with a changed business, says Cassidy.

"The addition of people like Hensley is getting us back ahead of the curve in terms of rebuilding what those professional channels look like and how they can operate in a new media world," he adds.

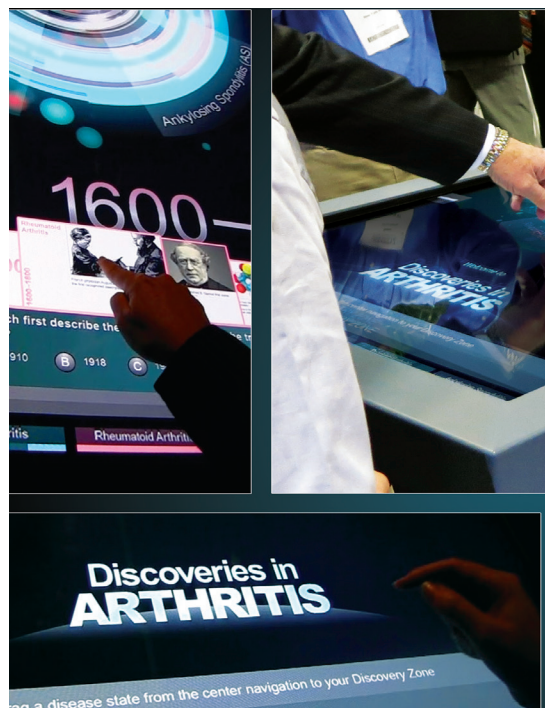
The shop has a heritage in cardiovascular and oncology drugs, where it won new business in 2012, but it has also pushed into diabetes, medical devices and CNS, says Cassidy. Wins included an assignment from Novartis for professional marketing on the company's autoimmune franchise and one for Valeant's Salex dermatology business. They lost a few, too, while other accounts grew smaller. In 2012, the agency launched Sanofi/Regeneron's colorectal cancer treatment Zaltrap globally, as well as Abbott Diabetes' InsulinX glucose monitor, for which they designed an iPad sales tool.

The firm is doing a lot of iPad content development and interactive convention experiences that let docs who can't make it out in person participate. So far, 2013 is showing "signs of growth" against downcast expectations, with "significant new business opportunities out on the street" and a number of solid RFPs, says Cassidy. Perhaps as importantly, he adds, morale is up.

"We have a sense of purpose to take to clients and we've focused a lot on the development of the team," says Cassidy, "We've got organic growth happening with existing clients and we're bringing out people who are genuinely excited to new business pitches, and we're seeing results there. There's a real authenticity that's bouncing around the halls here." — Matthew Arnold

"There's a real authenticity that's bouncing around the halls here"

—J.D. Cassidy



An iPad piece for Abbott Diabetes Care (above left) and an interactive display for Novartis (above)