



AT THE HELM

Al Topin, president

PERFORMANCE

Revenue rose about 6% last year

HIGHLIGHTS

AOR wins on two products from Mission Pharmacal: Binosto and Prednisolone 25

New work from Myriad Genetics and Studer Group

Increased digital capability, plus more patient- and physician-level work

CHALLENGES

Adapting to an industry dynamic that is constantly changing

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

Topin & Associates

Flexibility and focus keep agency on the right track for 30 years



Topin & Associates turned 30 last year and president Al Topin says the agency's ability to operate efficiently for clients—as well as the team that helps it do that—is cause for celebrating.

"I'm pleased that we have an excellent, responsive team with a good deal of experience," he says. "We've built the right agency with the right people."

Topin reports clients are optimistic but guarded. Revenue was up about 6% last year, and headcount held steady at 31.

"Our target is always a higher percentage increase than we saw in 2012," Topin says, "but I'm comfortable with it—especially with the way last year went at times. Clients are continuing to release their money quarterly. As long as they see results they'll release more money." Some clients increased spend last year, while others decreased it, and the dynamic has required flexibility.

The agency saw organic growth with long-time client Mission Pharmacal, winning AOR status on Binosto (osteoporosis) and Prednisolone 25 (asthma and allergy treatment). Both were successfully launched last year.

Existing client Myriad Genetics awarded a new product assignment, and hospital consulting organization Studer Group, which Topin & Associates had worked with a number of years ago, assigned ongoing branding and marketing work.

Lundbeck's epilepsy seizure treatment Sabril was lost, and Beltone was resigned.

Digital capability was increased, as the channel grows in importance for clients. Topin notes the agency is also doing more patient- and physician-level work.

"The physician has less time, and the patient has more questions," he says. "The issues and drugs are also getting more complex. It's important that you communicate clearly to physicians at launch and that they understand product benefits and differentiation. It's equally important to arm physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners and even front desk receptionists with appropriate things to say to patients because the patient is armed differently.

"Pharma companies need to understand that this is not as much selling as it is supporting," Topin continues. "If they do it properly it helps the sales reps because they demonstrate that they understand the issues the physician has to face." Pitches are underway now, and Topin expects a 10% bump in revenue this year.

"In the long run, our job is to help clients monitor the conversations going on," he says. "And it's not just physician/patient conversations—patients talking to pharmacists, people in the physician's office, other patients, etc. The moment of truth, which used to be



Work for the Parkinson's-disease drug Azilect (above left) and the website for Binosto (above)

when the script was written, has become a never-ending transaction. It's no longer an individual moment of truth—you have to be part of all the conversations. Our intent continues to be to monitor those conversations and develop appropriate programs that help clients be part of the conversations." — Tanya Lewis

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