



**AT THE HELM**

Larry J. Iaquinto, principal, brand strategist; Sheila Gerus, principal, brand strategist

**PERFORMANCE**

Following growth of 15% in 2012, last year saw 10% growth

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Launches and re-launches included Envarsus from Veloxis Pharmaceuticals, Otrexup from Antares Pharma and Ipsen's Somatuline

An emphasis on selectivity and targeted connecting with clients

**CHALLENGES**

Getting the word out about Renavatio

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 183

# Renavatio Healthcare Communications

Launch leaders: Agency excels at helping brands get to market



**R**enavatio's 2013 was the year of the launch—and the re-launch. During the year the agency geared up for the launch of Envarsus, Veloxis Pharmaceuticals' drug candidate for suppression of the immune response to prevent the rejection of transplanted organs; worked on the direct-to-patient and healthcare-provider components of the relaunch of Ipsen's Somatuline for acromegaly; and both picked up and launched Antares Pharma's Otrexup, a new subcutaneous injection formulation of methotrexate that uses an injection device rather than the traditional vial, needle and syringe administration.

Getting involved with brands on their way to launch can be a tricky proposition—and not all of Renavatio's bets have panned out. "We do quite a bit of work with brands that are in early development prior to launch," says Sheila Gerus, one of the agency's two principal/brand strategists. "Of course, those are always more high risk because not only are you taking on things that are not necessarily approved, but approvals can be delayed or there may be changes in anticipated claim structures. Last year for example, we had been working on brivanib [a Bristol-Myers Squibb compound in development for treatment of hepatocellular

carcinoma – Ed.] for five or six years in a strategic capacity, getting them ready, and all three trials did not meet their endpoint."

All in all, the wins seem to be outweighing the losses; Renavatio grew its top line by 15% in 2012 and another 10% in 2013. In fact, the agency is getting to the point where word-of-mouth marketing is no longer enough to sustain growth. "[One of our priorities is] to expand, essentially, awareness," Gerus says. "We have been a pretty stealth agency. My partner and I have known a lot of people in the industry and we have been very fortunate to gain work and grow over the last five years, just via word-of-mouth. I think we are now moving into a phase where we are being a little more deliberate in terms of refining our message and reaching out, and expanding the awareness of our organization."

What sort of thinking can a client expect from Renavatio? The agency seems to favor more technical brands for which share of voice is not a major driver—where, rather than blasting out a single message on a grand scale, brands have to be more selective and targeted about their marketing mix. While the agency's leaders have long thought in these terms—"We have always upheld that philosophy," Gerus says—some of its clients, still married to the carpet-bombing marketing strategies of yore, hadn't quite gotten there yet. But with brand resources being stretched, Renavatio is discovering that clients are naturally moving towards what the agency has been espousing all along.

"What I am finding is that more of our clients are moving a little bit more in our direction, because the resources are being stretched," Gerus says. "They are being forced to think about, 'Do we really need this massive advertising campaign?'"



**Renavatio's projects included (from left) digital work for Antares Pharma's Otrexup and a piece for Abbott Point of Care**

One less resource-intensive alternative that Gerus advocates is for companies to find ways to participate in the communities of patients that are growing up online, to fulfil those communities' needs for knowledge.

"Even in the most technical and rare disease states, patients are getting together with each other more and more," she says. "There is a demand for quality access to information. Our clients are finally even recognizing that. Even in the rare-disease states where in the past they thought, 'There is no patient influence to this at all, it's too technical and physicians look after everything.' Wrong. The patient is far more empowered than they have ever been." —Joshua Slatko

**"The patient is far more empowered than they have ever been"**

—Sheila Gerus