



**AT THE HELM**

Jim Weiss, CEO and chairman

**PERFORMANCE**

Revenues up 20% to \$75 million

**HIGHLIGHTS**

New offices in Boston, Minneapolis and Atlanta, plus nearly 100 new employees

Won an integrated AOR assignment on Apollo's LapBand

Developed MDigital Life, which indexes the social and digital channels used by more than 240,000 physicians

**CHALLENGES**

Finding ways to help clients move online

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

# W2O Group

A steady focus on data analytics brings a new level of relevance



**W**ith a 20% revenue gain to \$75 million, San Francisco-headquartered W2O Group continued to gain momentum last year.

New offices opened in Boston, Minneapolis and Atlanta, and full-time employees were up nearly 100 to 397 last year.

W2O Group houses a bevy of marketing, communications, research and development agencies, including WCG, Twist and BrewLife, that work on healthcare, consumer and tech business. Current healthcare clients include Avanir, Genentech and Merck.

"We're seeing the digital health space come of age," says CEO and chairman Jim Weiss. "Tech is now being applied to improve and revolutionize healthcare delivery and application. Because we've been so focused in data analytics and characterizing the emerging landscape of healthcare communication and delivery through the digital channel, I think we're suddenly more relevant."

W2O Group evolved out of Weiss's healthcare focused PR agency WeissComm Partners, so it has deep PR roots. Weiss says hiring Mike Hartman, formerly global executive creative director at DigitasLBi, as global chief creative officer last year, has helped

transform W2O Group into a true healthcare AOR.

"I've been investing in analytics, digital and social, and we're bringing these more modern approaches to the market, which is what clients want, but now we can also serve as a true AOR versus just a PR firm that does creative," Weiss explains.

The agency continues to develop unique offerings, including MDigital Life, which grew out of managing director Greg Matthews's significant relationships with physicians on Twitter. It's essentially a database that has, to date, indexed the social and digital channels used by more than 240,000 US physicians.

W2O Group uses MDigital Life to aggregate and analyze millions of points of data around physicians' attitudes, behaviors and connections on many topics. For example, the "MDigital Life Social Oncology Project" tapped the database to uncover insights into how doctors are communicating online about oncology.

"MDigital Life represents our continued investment in understanding the social and digital landscape of physicians today and how to reach them," Weiss says. "It adds value to everything we do as AOR for clients. Our clients can query doctors on their social channels or track conversations about specific topics, so it's a major source of data for healthcare brands."

MDigital Life also helps clients with clinical trial recruitment initiatives. "Targeted clinical trial recruitment is a real business imperative," Weiss says. "We're also helping clients get more patients into the online channel so we can track populations and maybe even change treatment paradigms in the future. It's an exciting time to be in healthcare—especially if you've been innovating in the digital space."

Growth continues to accelerate this year—the revenue goal is \$80 million to \$85 million, and Weiss expects to be on a run rate to hit \$100 million in 2015.

Significant recent wins include an integrated AOR assignment on Apollo's LapBand.



**Digital work for Bayer Animal Health (left) and Genomic Health's Oncotype DX (above)**

Though W2O Group is no doubt attractive to prospective buyers, Weiss isn't interested in selling.

"I don't think another company would let me do all this," he says. "I think they would try to break it down to the lowest common denominator so it becomes a widget. That definitely wouldn't motivate my people." — *Tanya Lewis*

**"Tech is now being applied to revolutionize healthcare delivery and application"**

—Jim Weiss