



AT THE HELM

David Paragamian, global president and COO; David Dunn, CEO

PERFORMANCE

Growth of 5% between 2012 and 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

Five new accounts included work from Sandoz, Amgen, Gilead and AstraZeneca

Worked as AOR for Novartis's breast-cancer drug Afinitor

Focus on immersive experiences helps its work to stand out

CHALLENGES

Working to redefine medical communications

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

"Folks hear about our reputation and they find us"

—David Dunn

The APO Group

Clinical quartet offers a wealth of brand-bolstering options



As it makes its way through a second full year as the APO Group—a four-part entity which includes the Huntsworth Health agencies Apothecom and Apothecom ScopeMedical, which create medical narratives and educational materials; Axiom, which creates resources and tools for MSLs and sales; and professional advertising firm nitrogen—the agency has found a firm place in providing the communications that surround a brand.

This broad scope helped drive the agency's 5% growth between 2012 and 2013, an effort that included picking up five new accounts, with work from Sandoz, Amgen, Gilead and AstraZeneca. This growth is in addition to 2013 achievements which included continuing to funnel its agencies' creative talents towards existing relationships, such as its AOR work for Novartis's breast cancer drug Afinitor.

CEO David Dunn tells *MM&M* the firm's abilities to address all four components of professional outreach with "science at the core," helps the agency stand out. He also says that the APO Group's ability to offer immersive, as opposed to merely interactive, pieces helps it further distinguish itself in the agency

world. Dunn says the participatory experiences which APO creates help brands go beyond what many offer as "interactive" experiences but are little more than multiple-choice surveys or a pushed message.

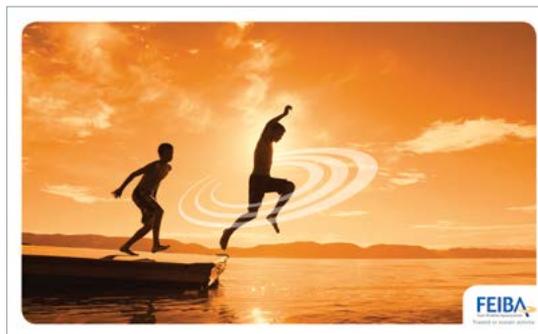
"Some of our competitors are rooted in what defined medcomm 10 years ago," global president and COO David Paragamian notes, adding that Apothecom turns 15 this year, and that the agency will continue to "stretch the edges of the envelope" to redefine medical communications.

As usual, Paragamian and Dunn are carving out time for the interview between wrapping up one client meeting and going to another. Dunn is headed off to work in Europe and Paragamian is staying in the US "for another day of more client engagements... we're always standing in an airport," Paragamian laughs.

This hands-on approach is one that typifies the APO approach, which is that clients have a relationship with senior management. That ethos follows hires such as Mike Ballas, brought in as managing director of sales and MSL group Axiom, and former JUICE exec Erika Maas who is heading up nitrogen's west coast office and owns the title vice president, account director and head of the US account management and client service team.

"Erika brings out that same lens that Mike does, which is somebody who is passionate about getting in front of the customer," Paragamian says.

The company also promoted APO vet Ryan Taggart to managing director of ScopeMedical, rounding out a year that included bringing on 15 new employees. "Folks hear about us and hear about our reputation and they find us," Dunn says, and notes that the sometimes unusual outflow of talent often ends up being



The APO Group's range of work included these two pieces created for Baxter Pharmaceuticals

"a reverse kind of compliment" because, for example, "we've had a couple of folks leave our organization who had been with us a very long time and where they went was to head up other organizations... it's a bittersweet kind of thing to be able to say."

It's also the kind of movement that has helped grow the company's business, which is mined from a mix of pitching and organic growth, as well as work that comes their way via hybrid: "Where we've had some great success is when a client leaves one organization and goes to another and wants to introduce us to that organization," Dunn says. —Deborah Weinstein