



AT THE HELM

Peter Nalen, president

PERFORMANCE

Growth of 28% last year

HIGHLIGHTS

Brought on new executives to manage expanding client roster

New clients included Questcor, Sarepta Therapeutics and Biogen Idec

Growing relationships with patient communities, advocacy groups and project management groups

CHALLENGES

Staying in front of patients' changing information and technology needs

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

"We engage and build relationships with patients and their communities"

—Peter Nalen

Compass Healthcare Marketers

A team of new leaders pilots agency to its best year ever



Compass Healthcare Marketers celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2013 by bringing on board a slew of new leaders to help manage the agency's growing roster. With the new team — Sandi Bryant at creative director, Brad Aufderheide at VP of strategic solutions, Paul Johnson at executive VP of client services, and Lisa Huff-Morales at director, finance controller — in place under agency president Peter Nalen, Compass enjoyed what Nalen calls its best year ever from both a revenue and a new business perspective. The agency grew by 28%; added several new clients, including Questcor, Sarepta Therapeutics, and Biogen Idec; and, in May 2014, moved into a larger and more flexible workspace.

"Ten years ago we began with one belief — to provide patients with better information so they can make better treatment decisions and have better health outcomes," Nalen says. "With this philosophy, Compass has formed strong partnerships with its clients in the rare-disease space and has led the way to many brand successes by offering a unique mix of patient-focused capabilities that include patient community engagement, clinical trial recruitment, and patient education and support programs."

What inspired all this movement? After a challenging 2012, and with an eye toward the future of healthcare and orphan-drug marketing — the agency's

specialty — Nalen envisioned a new agency model that would leverage Compass's capabilities to connect with patients and maximize the value that the agency can deliver across all stages of commercialization. Bringing the new leaders on board and moving his staff to a new space were all part of delivering on this vision.

The new team had barely figured out where the snack machine was before diving into the guts of Compass's operations. Bryant has already led the branding and campaign development of four launch brands and several support and incentive programs last year. Under Aufderheide's leadership, the Patient Relationship Management group at Compass is continuing its growth and influence, engaging with patient communities, advocacy groups, and individual patient influencers on behalf of clients. Johnson is leading the agency's account services and project management groups, ensuring the integration of strategic account management with effective resource management for all clients. And Huff-Morales is working to establish a new financial model that will allow the agency to make sound business decisions and continue on the growth trajectory Nalen has envisioned for the future.

In the midst of all this change, Compass remains focused on two things: rare diseases, and the patients who suffer from them. "Our digital heritage and years of rare-disease marketing expertise ensures our programs reach and meet the needs of our clients' patients and HCPs," Nalen says. "Our PatientFirst approach does not ignore the healthcare professional, but rather focuses the communication effort to HCPs through



A piece for the Seizure Clusters Community (left) and work for Raptor's Procysbi (above)

the lens of the ultimate brand influencer — the patient. By understanding patient behaviors and psychology, we engage and build relationships with patients and their communities and translate these relationships into successful HCP and patient campaigns and communications that build brands."

Up next for Compass: figuring out how to stay in front of the changing information and education needs of patients and HCPs, given the patient's rise in influence and decision-making power. "We will continue to be challenged on how best to determine what these needs are in order to develop the best programs that meet their needs before they even realize those needs exist," Nalen says. —Joshua Slatko