



AT THE HELM

Fingerpaint executive team

PERFORMANCE

Revenues nearly doubled, to \$18.7 million

HIGHLIGHTS

Added AOR accounts from Ikaria, Aerocrine, CSL Behring, Alimera Sciences and Vernalis

Won many awards, and ranked in *Inc.*'s list of America's fastest-growing companies

Added 40 staffers and moved into new headquarters

CHALLENGES

Balancing growth with a continued focus on core values

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

Fingerpaint

A collaborative spirit has put this agency on the road to growth



From last year's perspective, Ed Mitzen's Fingerpaint might have best been called an up-and-comer among pharmaceutical marketing agencies. But the independent, employee-owned agency has turned that potential into performance.

Fingerpaint nearly doubled its revenue in 2013 to \$18.7 million; won AOR accounts from Ikaria, Aerocrine, CSL Behring, Alimera Sciences and Vernalis; grew its roster to 33 clients; added 40 staffers; moved into a new 30,000-square-foot headquarters; opened an office in Wayne, PA; and acquired Cotton Hill, a full-service audio and video production company, adding broadcast and online content production to the agency's substantial list of client services. Also, in January, it added another office, this one in Manhattan. Oh, and lest we forget, Fingerpaint did some work for clients, too.

"Fingerpaint was instrumental in the global launch of Alimera Sciences' Iluvien, working with international partners to develop print and digital tactics in Germany, the United Kingdom, and France," Mitzen says. "In fact, helping clients prepare for product launches was an overriding focus of 2013."

All this activity has been noticed, and not just by peers in the pharma industry. Fingerpaint was ranked No. 815 on *Inc.* Magazine's 2013 Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest-growing companies, and earned the magazine's Hire Power Award for staff growth and job creation. The agency also picked up an impressive 11 awards from the 2013 edition of the International Davey Awards, which recognizes creative work across many categories from small agencies worldwide; earned two awards from the International Academy of Visual Arts; and added two more awards from the Summit Creative Awards competition. Not bad for a toddler just turning six.

Mitzen credits much of Fingerpaint's success to the agency's collaborative philosophy, reflected in the new headquarters' open floorplan and lack of offices, not to mention an absence of titles. "Fingerpaint's reputation in the marketplace is continuing to grow, driven primarily by our commitment to uncommon collaboration," he says.

Looking forward, the agency is finding itself executing more and more digital work in the area of eCRM. "Clients want to truly add value and build relationships with key customer segments," Mitzen says. "They are recognizing that the days of pushing out their product message over and over again are dead. It's exciting to be executing cutting edge customer engagement programs which ultimately will drive client and product loyalty."

Fingerpaint's leaders are projecting a nearly 50% staffing increase as well as a 55% revenue growth for the agency in 2014. Much of the year's focus will continue to be on growing business organically with



Fingerpaint executed work for Upsher-Smith (above) and Alimera Sciences' Iluvien (left)

"Clients want to truly add value and build relationships with key customer segments"

—Ed Mitzen

clients, new business pitch wins, and an expansion of additional services through partnerships and acquisitions—all of which will support the agency's goal of expanding its global presence as the client work requires it.

"Fingerpaint will remain grounded as we grow, ensuring we don't run faster than our legs will carry us," Mitzen says. "We will continue to balance our growth by staying committed to our core values: people first, collaboration, integrity, will to win, and philanthropy." —Joshua Slatko