



AT THE HELM

Elizabeth Apelles, CEO

PERFORMANCE

Revenue is up 15% and headcount grew by 23

HIGHLIGHTS

Launched Adjacent to One, a product and design company

Brought on its first health insurance company, Blue Shield of California

Added AOR work for AbbVie to a roster including Amgen, Entrotech, Ferring and Novartis

CHALLENGES

Finding staffers who “understand the full-brand ecosystem”

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

Greater Than One

Figuring out big data paves a pathway to large-scale growth



Greater than One has a well-thought-out take on the possibilities presented by the emergence of big data. While many agencies like to espouse what they see as the virtues of big data—its sheer enormity—the industry is beginning to wake up to a new reality: information of any size will only take you as far as you can understand it. And Greater than One is focusing its energies on leveraging the understanding of big data and making it work for their clients.

“Data has always been our friend,” says Greater than One CEO Elizabeth Apelles. “Now that technology has picked up steam, and we’re able to look at enormous masses of it,” the agency has bolstered its efforts to interpret it.

“It’s what we call AIS, or analytics, insight and strategy. Mostly, it’s statisticians, that’s an intensive part of our business now,” she explains. “It’s continued to grow because data drives value and decisions.”

Some of those decisions include things like making the call on where and when a campaign should be deployed, Apelles explains. “People in California don’t work on the weekends, which you see from what they’re doing online. So if it’s for a health insurance

company, we wouldn’t advertise on the weekends.”

“We definitely have that big data mindset, but we also have the creative and imagination to take it and create value,” she says.

Greater than One also sees quite a bit of value in media. The agency spun off a media shop of its own last year. “Our roots are in media and search,” Apelles points out, “We launched Greater than One Media to put some more muscle behind something we believe we’re already very good at.”

And so far that strategy has gotten off to a good start. The agency reported 15% growth this year compared to 2013, moved its San Francisco office into a larger space and launched Adjacent to One—a product and design company. Their headcount also grew to 125 in 2013—up 23 from the year prior. That number includes three senior hires—Hamp Hampton, as senior director business development; Gregory Gross as executive creative director, content; and Roisin Cooper as director of HR.

Another laurel for the past year, according to Apelles, is GTO Lifeline, the agency’s efforts centered around the Affordable Care Act. “We’re launching the product with the fifth largest hospital network in the US with the ultimate goal of reducing amputations. It syncs up to one of the parameters of the Affordable Care Act, which is to increase patient education at a lower cost.

“It’s an engaged piece,” she adds, “with a 3D animated module that surgeons will use to educate patients. Patients are not getting the information today in a way they understand. What’s unique about it is that it delivers information directly from the surgeon or nurse to the patient in a way they understand—and it’s interactive, visual and tactile.”



A booth that was set up for AbbVie (left) and a breast-cancer awareness piece (above)

Greater than One also brought on its first health insurance company in Blue Shield of California. It also added AOR work for AbbVie to a roster of Amgen, Entrotech, Ferring, Roche Genentech, Hologic, Medtronic, Novartis and Novant.

New pre-launch work for AbbVie’s altrasentan (CKD) also spurred a search for those with more traditional marketing skills. “We’re looking for people who understand the full brand ecosystem, both digital and physician. We used to only focus on the digital, which is the work we’re doing with altrasentan, and also the reason we started Adjacent to One.” —Kevin McCaffrey

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