



AT THE HELM

Scott Goudy, president; Laura Perry, managing director

PERFORMANCE

Revenue growth of 30%, placing agency in the \$15-to-\$25 million range

HIGHLIGHTS

Wins from existing and new clients included AOR work from Arbor Pharmaceuticals, Attends Healthcare Products and Salix Pharmaceuticals

Building the agency's analytics component

CHALLENGES

Dealing with the impact caused by shifting client budgets

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

MedThink Communications

A nimble, flexible approach attracts a diversified client base



MedThink Communications enjoyed 30% growth in revenue last year, which bumped the Raleigh, NC, based agency into the \$15-to-\$25 million range.

"We continued to add new clients, diversify our client base and evolve the role we play with clients," says president Scott Goudy. "As price pressure and scrutiny increase, all healthcare clients need their dollars to work harder. We're building up the analytics component of the agency so we can help clients use their marketing investment more effectively."

Wins last year came in from both existing and new clients. After a pitch, existing client Arbor Pharmaceuticals awarded new professional AOR assignments on hypertension treatments Edarbyclor and Edarbi.

Professional AOR status was also won from new client Attends Healthcare Products on an adult briefs product for incontinence/bladder control. Health Catalyst, another new client, awarded project work on content management, lead generation and paid search.

Early this year, the agency was assigned five new digital AOR accounts from founding client Salix Pharmaceuticals (after Salix acquired Santarus). The products include GI, diabetes and cholesterol treatments.

No losses were reported for last year.

"We're excited about our organic growth and about winning new clients outside pharma," Goudy says. "We want to continue to diversify and expand in healthcare."

Laura Perry, who was previously SVP, account management supervisor at Ogilvy CommonHealth Worldwide, was hired in September 2013 as director of client services. Goudy officially promoted her to managing director of the agency in December.

Perry says she joined with "new ideas about how to allocate staff and optimize resources," and so staff was downsized from 84 ending 2013 to 62 this year.

"We'll adapt to whatever needs come up," Goudy says of staff size. "It's really not hard to recruit. We're in a pocket of significant healthcare talent. There are several large research institutions in our backyard, and Raleigh is a great place to live."

A new data scientist joined the agency last year, and account director Melissa Mart was promoted to director of new business development.

Goudy feels the agency might be "more weighted in digital" work than other agencies, noting that it's been flexible and small enough to adapt quickly to the digital migration.

Shifting budgets are par for the course for all agencies these days, and Perry says the opportunity to work with a nimble, independent agency was appealing.

"Working at a large holding company has its benefits, but in a large, matrixed organization, there is often less autonomy to make rapid decisions," she adds.



MedThink's clients include Salix's Fulyzaq (left) and Arbor's heart medication BiDil (above)

"Healthcare in general is evolving very rapidly," Goudy says. "The Affordable Care Act is having a big impact. There are a lot of variables in play, so it's not as predictable, and that's a challenge. Five to 10 years ago you had a budget, and it was stable. Today things change quite a bit."

Revenue for Q1 2014 was on par with Q1 2013, but Goudy says volume of work is down a bit in Q2 2014.

This year is MedThink's 10th anniversary. A rebrand, including a new value proposition, is in the works.

—Tanya Lewis

"We want to continue to diversify and expand in healthcare"

—Scott Goudy