



AT THE HELM
Managing partners (L-R): Ralph Skorge and Michael Schreiber, creative directors; and Bernie Coccia, director of client services

HIGHLIGHTS

Fast growth: hired 50 staff, bringing the total to 120

Won a Novartis MS drug and the launch of its diabetes drug Galvus

Solidifying management structure

CHALLENGES

Managing growth while maintaining the "entrepreneurial atmosphere"

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"I interviewed hundreds of people, and no one told me they grew up wanting to work in medical advertising"

—Bernie Coccia

AgencyRx

CDM splinter is off to an explosive start, propelled by Novartis work



AgencyRx (formerly DDB Rx) aims to establish itself as "one of the premier healthcare agencies within Omnicom," says Bernie Coccia, managing partner, director of client services. With revenues more than doubling in 2006, the agency is clearly gaining ground and establishing itself as a force.

"We have the base of business, and accelerated growth has allowed us to really be noticed," Coccia adds.

The agency emerged in 2005 as a Cline, Davis, & Mann spin-off to avoid conflicts of interest (and for the entrepreneurial fun of it) after client Novartis consolidated agencies. This led to partnerships between healthcare and consumer agencies, such as DDB. The name DDB Rx reflected the new partnership and also led to assumptions that the agency was DDB's property rather than its partner on Novartis business.

"We grew so quickly and became so successful onto ourselves—we needed our own identity," says Michael Schreiber, managing partner, creative director.

Coccia says last year's greatest challenge was managing growth while maintaining the entrepreneurial atmosphere. Fifty people were hired, bringing headcount to 120 ending 2006. Schreiber notes that finding talent is challenging, and the agency looks within first.

Investments in an HR director and a full-time

recruiter have also yielded "excellent candidates." The partners need diverse talent and are open-minded about background and experience. A summer internship program raises awareness of "incredible career opportunity in the industry, specifically at this agency," Schreiber says. "I've interviewed hundreds of people, and no one has told me they grew up wanting to work in medical advertising." The agency's reputation also draws talent. "Positive buzz that we [are a] growing, hot shop made recruiting easier," Coccia says. "It was understood we were doing great work and attracting clients rather than losing them."

AgencyRx is AOR for all Novartis neuroscience brands and Enablex. It has significant oncology and pain management business, and retained all accounts last year. Organic growth and new wins contributed to skyrocketing revenue. The agency won a Novartis MS drug and was awarded Galvus, a type II diabetes treatment (in clinicals) without pitching. "It's a big category, a big client, and a big launch," Coccia says of the win. "We were assigned it on merits of our previous work."

Coccia says professional recognition was another highlight of 2006. Schreiber adds to the list solidifying management structure, including Coccia's arrival in March 2006 and Laurence Richards' appointment to EVP, and moving to a bigger office space.

Changes in dynamics between sales reps and physicians demand more creativity, which fuels a need for diverse talent. "We'll see more interactivity in sales calls," Coccia says. "Pharma ad agencies [will] become



Above: Journal ad for Novartis' Focalin XR, Top left: Professional sales materials for Novartis' Gleevec

even more like consumer cousins in that we'll create mini interactive films that sales reps take to doctors. It will require staff with creative capability and willingness to push the envelope."

AgencyRx has in-house production facilities, and about 20% of clients currently use its services. "It's still new, so there's a wait and see to make sure ROI is there," Schreiber says. "The more success we have, the more in demand it becomes."

Schreiber adds, "We've come a long way in a short time, and we're just getting started." —Tanya Lewis