



**AT THE HELM**  
David Kramer, CEO

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
MBC acquired by Digitas in 2006 and rebranded as Digitas Health

Added work from existing clients: Wyeth, AstraZeneca, Celgene, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Roche, Merck, Barrier Therapeutics, King

Added heavyweights GlaxoSmithKline and De Novo Pharmaceuticals

**CHALLENGES**  
Lost longtime MBC president Linda Holliday

Finding and retaining talent

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 143

**“Changing your name is a wrenching experience. I still catch myself calling ourselves MBC”**

—David Kramer

# Digitas Health

The former MBC agency thrives on the support of its new parent

For the last decade, Digitas has been one of the pre-eminent global brands in the digital-marketing space, earning plaudits for its online work on behalf of A-list clients like American Express and General Motors. So it only made sense that, following its acquisition of Medical Broadcasting Company (MBC) in January 2006, the global online behemoth would rebrand its tech-focused entity as Digitas Health.

“We knew that the pharmaceutical, bioscience and medical-devices worlds have been embracing digital media like never before,” says David Kramer, CEO of Digital Health. “It was a no-brainer decision.”

Still, with change often comes discontent, especially when a brand like MBC is involved. There was a sense that MBC’s boutique-like feel would be a casualty. But while some of the knowledge-sharing and cross-training that followed proved trying, the changes mostly went off without a hitch.

Kramer credits his top lieutenants and the entire staff for their openmindedness and willingness to embrace the new reality. “I’m not sentimental, but changing your name is a wrenching experience,” he says. “One out of five times, I still catch myself calling ourselves MBC.”

The occasional slips of the tongue can be excused, especially given the obvious enthusiasm Kramer has for the Digitas brand. Finding and retaining the best people remains a huge challenge, but the Digitas name has

helped the artist formerly known as MBC in its recruitment efforts. “Quite frankly, the Digitas name is an attractive thing,” Kramer notes.

Digitas Health can also reference digital work done for any number of Digitas clients and adapt it for the healthcare environment. “The access to learnings across industries has been very, very valuable already,” says Michael du Toit, EVP, marketing and client services. Similarly, the “new” Digitas Health has been able to access the direct marketing and CRM expertise that the “old” MBC lacked.

The company added work from a long list of existing clients: Wyeth, AstraZeneca, Celgene, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Roche, Merck, Barrier Therapeutics and King Pharmaceuticals. It also added heavyweights, GlaxoSmithKline and De Novo Pharmaceuticals, to its roster. According to Larry Mickelberg, EVP, strategy and new business, the success in luring new business is easy to explain: “Clients have increased interest in digital marketing, and that’s something we happen to do very well.”

As for losses, the most difficult one came on the personnel front. Linda Holliday, MBC’s president, decided to leave the firm after working alongside Kramer for 20 years. “I won’t try to replace her. The unique trendspotting abilities she has can’t be replaced,” Kramer says. A succession plan was put in place months ago and her duties have been split between the executive team.

Digitas Health has its mind on the bigger picture:



**Above: Web site for Wyeth Neuroscience**

doing its part to help resuscitate the scuffed reputation of the industry.

“We feel that by working more closely with everybody in the system, we can help improve the way people perceive this industry,” Kramer says. “It sounds a little arrogant out of context, but we feel like we have the muscle to pull it off.” —Larry Dobrow