



AT THE HELM

Doug Burcin, president

PERFORMANCE

Solid double-digit growth driven by top client Sanofi-Aventis

HIGHLIGHTS

Handled return to market of Biogen Idec's Tysabri

Won new work from Endo for Synera

Additional new business: Otsuka Pharmaceuticals and oncology assignments from GlaxoSmithKline

Julie Monroid joins as EVP, managing director

CHALLENGES

Growing demand from clients for greater agency value

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

Euro RSCG Life MetaMax

Winning pitches with its new, flat management structure in place



The business of selling ideas moves at breakneck speed, according to Euro RSCG Life MetaMax president Doug Burcin.

“Let’s put it this way,” Burcin says, “right now, we have four pitches within the next six weeks.”

If past results are indicative future outcomes, then it appears the odds are in MetaMax’s favor—the agency is coming off winning five out of its last five pitches.

MetaMax experienced solid “double-digit” growth in 2006, driven largely by its top client Sanofi-Aventis.

MetaMax handled the return to market of Biogen Idec’s MS treatment Tysabri in US and ex-US markets following a market suspension. “We were in a really unique position of having launched Tysabri and having to pull it back and basically go dark with no guarantees that anything was going to happen,” Burcin says. “We just had a lot of faith in the actual product and what it was bringing to the MS community and the fact that the FDA would be convinced that the benefit/risk profile was still in favor of a return to market decision.”

On the new business front, MetaMax won work from current client Endo Pharmaceuticals in the form of anesthetic Synera. “They awarded us the business with-

out a pitch, which is probably the best compliment any agency can get,” Burcin says. Other new business included wins from Otsuka Pharmaceuticals and oncology assignments from GlaxoSmithKline.

A result of the added business, MetaMax has bulked up its staff in recent months. Most notably, the agency added Julie Monroid, formerly of Cline Davis & Mann, as EVP, managing director. She was brought aboard to assist Burcin, whose responsibilities have grown within Euro RSCG Life since the beginning of 2007, when the Havas healthcare network evolved its leadership model. In January, longtime Euro RSCG Life CEO Ron Pantello wound down his legacy, becoming chairman emeritus. Donna Murphy was named COO, Euro RSCG Life Worldwide. Michel Nakache was appointed CEO Europe/Asia, Euro RSCG Life. Burcin and Euro RSCG Life Chelsea president Ed Stapor were named co-CEOs North America for Euro RSCG Life.

“The new structure has enabled us to flatten the organization so that we are in much closer contact with the operating units, the business units, our staff and our clients,” Burcin says.

As MetaMax continues to blossom, its strategy has been to recruit creative talent from outside the industry.

“Clients are expecting a lot more from agencies these days and us trying to attract talent from other areas, those who have solved all kinds of different problems in different categories, is actually helping us with our overall service and it’s showing in our growth,” Burcin says.

One challenge ahead continues to be elevating the quality of the agency’s contribution to its clients, says Burcin. “The bottom line is that clients are expecting

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—Doug Burcin



Above: Professional ad for Endo's Synera
Top left: From a journal ad for Biogen Idec

more value from agencies,” he says. “Therefore, we have to step up and really push and challenge our people. Good isn’t good enough anymore. Our work must be great. Otherwise clients aren’t going to pay for it.”

Focusing on the future, Burcin’s outlook is upbeat. “I consider MetaMax the best kept secret in the industry,” Burcin says. “We’re coming out of that. But right now, we’re the best kept secret.” —Stephen McGuire