



**AT THE HELM**

John Kane, principal and managing director; and Bob Finkel, principal and chief creative officer

**PERFORMANCE**

Revenues increased to \$21.5 million vs. 2005

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Secured AOR status for DTC work for UCB's Keppra and professional portfolio for Abbott Diabetes Care

Launched FzioMed's synthetic dermal filler outside US, landed Glumetza and the Latin America and EU work for Astellas' immunology division

**CHALLENGES**

Successfully integrating online and offline; dealing with industry scrutiny

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

**“Negativity can inspire action. Taglines aren't going to fix it and staying silent isn't going to fix it”**

—Bob Finkel

# Kane and Finkel Healthcare Communications

San Francisco shop pauses for breath after a decade of explosive growth



**K**ane & Finkel celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. “We’ve come a long way from when Bob and I were sitting on milk crates and I was the IT guy,” says John Kane, principal, managing director.

Last year revenues increased to \$21.5 million (up 4%). Following previous double-digit increases, 2006 growth was modest by design. “We made a conscious decision to tone down growth to make sure we keep clients serviced while we find new people,” says Kane.

Though discriminating about new business, the agency picked up big wins, including AOR status DTC work for UCB's flagship brand Keppra (epilepsy) and the entire professional portfolio for Abbott Diabetes Care. It launched FzioMed's synthetic dermal filler outside the US; landed glycemic control medication Glumetza, co-marketed by Depomed and King; and was awarded EU and Latin American business for the immunology division of Astellas. OTC for legacy client Neutrogena was lost due to a conflict of interest, but Kane & Finkel retained OrthoNeutrogena. Two late lifecycle brands for Connetics were lost to another agency after Connetics and Stiefel merged, and Abraxis Oncology fell through amid corporate restructuring.

Kane & Finkel won more than 10 awards last year,

and landing Keppra was a milestone. “To get a sizable DTC client is a major feather in our cap,” says Bob Finkel, principal, chief creative officer.

Kane says the agency is “more integrated online and offline,” and interactive is growing. “You can't just be print or online,” he notes. “You have to have an integrated approach. We're executing on that now.”

Former client Allison Kaiser from Monogram Biosciences was hired as director of strategic planning, a newly created position, late last year. Headcount is currently 70 (up a bit from last year). Finkel says referral, luck and staff financial incentives help draw good hires.

“We need to find people and train them,” Finkel says. “Being in a learning environment without typical pressures was nice. It kept things fresh, and I got to surround myself with youthful talent. Recycling is the biggest problem with recruiters.”

Regulatory scrutiny challenges the industry and agencies. “The gray area has widened,” Finkel says. “Clients are more conservative and more leery of things that in the past were clearly thought to be supportable. The FDA is slowing or rethinking precedent. If the spotlight is on the FDA, they're going to try and diffuse that pressure by putting it back on the industry.”

Kane notices increasingly sophisticated consumer relationship programs. Finkel adds, “If claims previously allowable are more restricted, it shifts some of the weight on continuing to enforce good relationships. Relationships are built on approvable values.”

Though he believes the industry's reputation isn't totally deserved, Finkel thinks companies must act.



**Above: Professional ad for Astellas' Advagraf**  
**Top left: Program guide for Abbott Diabetes Care**

“From a product brand standpoint there's only so much you can do,” he says. “Pharma companies are going to have to step up communications from a corporate standpoint and put a different face on the industry one company at a time. They must reach people with programs and actionable contributions that demonstrate heartfelt commitment. Negativity can inspire action. Taglines aren't going to fix it and staying silent isn't going to fix it. The more astute companies step up.”

—Tanya Lewis