



AT THE HELM

Kathy Magnuson, EVP, managing director

PERFORMANCE

Didn't maintain double-digit growth, but didn't have significant losses

HIGHLIGHTS

Grew organically with Sciele Pharma

Handled the launch of Aplenzin in only 14 weeks for Sanofi-Aventis

Worked on a website for kids for Allegra

CHALLENGES

Pressure from clients to get more involved in the digital space

Doing more with less

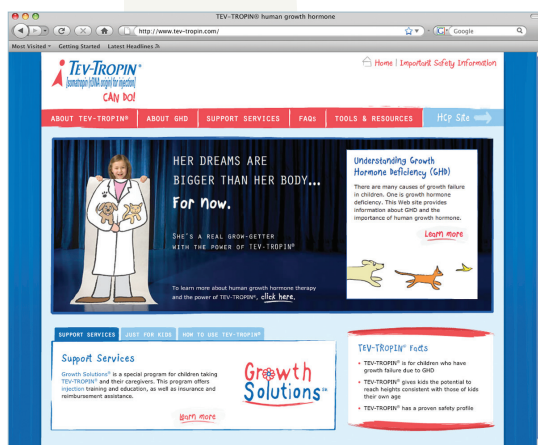
For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 175

“You need to hit the right targets or the right people at the right time”

—Kathy Magnuson

Brand Pharm

Offering clients strategic thinking and efficiencies in the tactical execution



Teva Pharmaceuticals' Tev-Tropin site—a growth hormone therapy—was designed solely with kids in mind

Kathy Magnuson is one of those people who prefers to look at the glass as half-full.

Magnuson, executive vice president, managing director of Brand Pharm, says that while her company didn't maintain the double-digit growth that it had in 2006 and 2007, they didn't have significant losses either.

“We're holding our own,” says Magnuson.

Magnuson's optimism is palpable. “We've received additional assignments from existing clients such as Sciele Pharma that recently gave us the assignment for the rest of their pediatric products,” she says. “That's a positive sign of the work that we are doing.”

Brand Pharm also received an assignment from Sanofi-Aventis, including the launch of Aplenzin for depression, which was completed in 14 weeks.

“We've had some great successes with some campaigns,” says Magnuson.

One example of those successes is a website that the company is just finishing up for Allegra for kids.

“We're excited with work that we did for Tev-Tropin

with their website and their patient materials,” she says. “And the biggest accomplishment is the fact that some of these clients have just awarded us new business, because they are pleased with the work that we're doing. That's always the biggest compliment.”

Brand Pharm hasn't had any significant changes in personnel from 2008 going into 2009. Magnuson notes that although some people decided to leave, the company is looking at ways that it can do more with what she called “a right-sized staff” as opposed to immediately going out and replacing people.

She notes that there are more people in the talent pool these days and more people available to interview. The challenge, she says, is finding those who can fulfill the clients' needs for digital technology.

“We're looking more and more for people who can work in that space,” she explains.

Among the current trends in medical advertising, Magnuson says that she sees a lot of pressure from clients to get more involved in the digital space and to do more with less and try to utilize the new technology so that they are reaching a targeted group of people with fewer resources.

Magnuson said that although social media is gaining momentum, she believes that it is not a great way to advertise products, but rather it is more of an informational tool.

“I think that social media is more of an informational tool in terms of getting disease state information out there,” she says. “But by the same token, when you've got your clients looking at you saying ‘I need to know that all of these tactics are driving sales,’ it's hard to turn around and say that doing an informational tool is going to drive sales unless you are the market leader.”

Magnuson says that the new dynamic has resulted in a change in media spend.

“I think people are putting a greater proportion of their media spend into the digital technologies resulting in cuts in overall DTC spending,” she notes.

“It used to be that you would say you have to surround everybody and hit every medium, now we're saying you need to hit the right targets or the right people at the right time,” she explains. “And that's probably where the digital technology will help us the most.”

Regarding future plans and expectations, Magnuson says that she is looking at how to structure Brand Pharm in a way to address some of the new challenges.

Magnuson asks: “How do we make sure that we are prepared to move forward in 2010 and 2011 and take advantage of some of the economic situations, to offer our clients the strategic thinking they need, while at the same time offer them some efficiencies in the tactical execution?”

“We are looking at ways to structure an agency of alternative performance, not just alternative thinking,” she notes. “And then make sure that we have the right people in those jobs to deliver against it.”

—Anthony Vecchione