



**AT THE HELM**

Garnett Dezember, president

**PERFORMANCE**

Building on momentum from 2008

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Picked up five new accounts, including work from Lundbeck and Merck

Hired for work on two pipeline products, for Syntonix and Roche

Launched two divisions: Axcelo MSL Solutions and Interphase Bioconsulting

**CHALLENGE**

Finding alternate ways to reach doctors to educate and promote products

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

**“You can’t keep adding sales forces to call on physicians when they have less time to treat a growing patient population”**

—Garnett Dezember

# The Navicor Group

High-sci shop picks up five accounts, expands with MSL, consulting offerings



**W**ith more than 800 products moving through pipelines in the oncology area alone, specialty product communications makes for steady work, if you can get it. Navicor Group has shown it can tap into that business stream.

Last year the agency, part of inVentiv Health, expanded its account roster as well as its menu of offerings, picking up five oncology and immunology accounts from new and existing clients and launching two new divisions. “We expect to build on that momentum this year,” says Garnett Dezember, president.

With the agency’s singular focus on specialty products, there’s reason for optimism.

“That’s where we see the market growing: big companies focused on primary care are shifting their approach to specialty therapeutic areas,” says Dezember. “We’re pretty comfortable with where we are right now.”

And it shows. The agency suffered no losses and won five new accounts last year, including hematology drugs ATryn (Lundbeck) and Zolanza (Merck). Recently brought into the fold was MiRview, a Rosetta Genomics three-in-one diagnostic oncology tool.

Navicor was also hired to work on pipeline products by Syntonix, for a hemophilia compound, and by Roche, for an insulin growth factor being developed

to treat a variety of cancers. Headcount stands at 54, and Dezember expects to hire a few more.

“We’re seeing more and more products in clinical development than at any other time in history,” observes Dezember. “That’s a good thing, because there are more shots on goal for success.”

Navicor is looking to score other kinds of pre-launch business, as well. Often smaller biotech companies and startups lack the resources to hire their own medical science liaison organization, which can help with accrual generation and KOL relationship development.

Axcelo MSL Solutions, a new division, looks to address this through a time-share arrangement. Portions of a medical science liaison’s time in a clinical trial center can be purchased by competing companies, “increasing [client] resources for minimal capital investment,” notes Dezember. Axcelo also “gives us a way to constantly have our fingers on the pulse of the market and where the opportunities are.”

Clients of the new unit include Argos Therapeutics and its product in development for kidney cancer; Precision Therapeutics’ ChemoFx, a drug response marker to determine how chemotherapy will affect tumor cells; and Infinity Pharmaceuticals’ heat shock protein, which is in clinical trials to treat cancer.

Because many of these same companies don’t have marketing research organizations they can turn to that are 100% focused on oncology and immunology,



**Above: A journal ad for Genentech's Tarceva; Left: From a direct mail piece promoting a Gilead booth**

Navicor launched a second new division to satisfy this need. Interphase Bioconsulting offers qualitative and quantitative research post-launch, including satisfaction audits and target-profile assessment.

Dezember foresees one big challenge related to the sheer number of compounds and biologics in development. The population of oncologists and hematologists is remaining flat over the near term, while the Baby Boomers are growing older and presenting with higher incidences of diseases like cancer.

“We’re finding a real access problem for our clients,” he explains. “You can’t keep adding sales forces to call on physicians when they have less time to treat a growing patient population. It’s going to be our challenge to find a good way to educate and promote product and not encroach on the time available for these physicians.” —Marc Iskowitz