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Digitas Health

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During the first few months of 2007, Medical Broadcasting Co. underwent a series of changes. The agency's parent company, **Digitas Inc.**, was bought by Paris-based **Publicis Groupe** in February. Two months later, the decision was announced to marry **MBC** with the health arm of Publicis' **Digitas** agency, creating **Digitas Health**.

The merger move caught the attention of the press and competition, agency leaders say. These leaders believe that **Digitas Health** is ready for the spotlight. In its strongest and best new business development year in history, **Digitas Health** won 15 new brands/accounts and generated significant growth in existing core accounts. The agency's revenue growth was about 50% overall. Growth was across the board, year over year, from 2006-2007 in every capability, including digital marketing, relationship management, search, media, and analytics.

The year's accomplishments

Led by CEO **David Kramer**, the agency unveiled a new strategy that is focused on having clients view digital marketing as their core marketing plan, rather than as alternative media.

Because consumers — both patients and healthcare professionals — visit the Internet first and most often for health information, **Digitas Health** leadership believes that healthcare



(from left) **Michael Golub, M.D.**, chief medical officer; **Alexandra vonPlato**, chief creative officer; **Larry Mickelberg**, executive VP, strategy & new business; **Michael du Toit**, executive VP, marketing; **Len Dolce**, senior VP, general manager; **David Kramer**, CEO

companies must provide relevant and useful information on the Web and consider digital media first when designing their marketing campaigns. **Digitas Health** believes that marketing should be "direct for consumers" rather than "direct to consumers." The agency advises its clients to generate positive brand experiences that help patients, doctors, and caregivers by providing them with the trustworthy information, treatments, tools, and support they need to make the best healthcare choices. **Digitas Health** executives are encouraging clients to consider the agency as their lead one. In that position, **Digitas Health** will provide a core of next-generation marketing that is supported by traditional media.

The work **Digitas Health** is producing for clients has generated industry buzz. For example, the agency created the first-ever branded pharmaceutical social media project, **CelebrationChain.com**. Developed for client **AstraZeneca** (astrazeneca.com), the Website allows people to create and send celebratory messages about a breast cancer survivor. The Website has earned attention from the national media and bloggers.

Digitas Health grew from one location in Philadelphia, still the agency's headquarters, to three locations across the nation, including Chicago and New York, and recently added a London practice. Reflective of this growth is a staff increase of 110% during the past year. The agency had an

attrition rate of just 7%. The agency added talent across the board, from graphic designers to project managers to healthcare professionals such as doctors and nurses, as well as former pharmaceutical company employees. Although recruiting talent in a highly competitive market can be challenging, Digitas Health was aided by its recognition by the *Philadelphia Business Journal* as one of its Best Places to Work — the only agency to win this year. Additionally, CNN.com and CareerBuilder singled out the agency as having some of the best “work perks” in the nation.

Digitas Health also garnered attention from the awards community, taking home more than 15 awards and honors, including *Pharmaceutical Executive* Ad Stars, eHealthcare Leadership Awards, Global Awards, *DTC Perspectives* on Excellence Awards, DTC National Awards, Health Information Resource Center World Wide Web Health Awards, Rx Club Awards, and PhAME Awards.

The agency was visible on the conference circuit, having presented at nearly every conference in the industry. Chief Medical Officer Michael Golub, M.D., Chief Creative Officer Alexandra vonPlato, Senior VP of Media Matt McNally, Senior VP Bruce Grant, and Senior VP Scott Reese received top billing at conferences held by DTC, CBI, eyeForPharma, and

Pharmaceutical Executive. Topics included the shift to on-demand pharmaceutical marketing, using broadband video, best practices, media and search, and emerging technologies. Digitas Health was the only marketing agency invited to speak at the new Health 2.0 conference, a Web 2.0 event in Silicon Valley that sold out months before the event date.

Executive leadership was also highly visible in the media, with authored bylines in several industry publications by Mr. Grant, Dr. Golub, Executive VP Michael du Toit, and Executive VP Larry Mickelberg, on topics ranging from digital and Web 2.0 branding to helping with the physician/patient dialogue.

Structure and services

As one of the largest interactive marketing agencies catering exclusively to healthcare and pharmaceutical companies, Digitas Health provides services to 12 of the nation’s top 15 pharmaceutical companies in addition to a number of smaller pharmaceutical, wellness, and over-the-counter brands. Services include advertising, public relations, direct marketing and affinity programs, search-engine marketing, social media, Web development, emerging media, research and analytics, viral indexing, as well as behavioral measurement.

Future plans

Job opportunities are still available in nearly every position, and Digitas Health’s recruiting team is working hard to fill them by branching out to top talent in cities across the United States. The agency is promising a career renaissance for those in traditional advertising agencies and across the media landscape who are looking to change the direction of their career.

The agency is also looking to build up new business in the medical-device and biotechnology sectors, as well as in health and wellness consumer products, perhaps in partnership with colleagues at parent company Digitas (digitas.com). Overall, Digitas Health is focusing on broadening assignments with existing clients as the company steps into the lead role, replacing traditional agencies and helping change the way healthcare companies market to consumers.

According to agency leaders, Digitas Health is aiming to be the lead agency that can develop, integrate, and execute a holistic-brand strategy to help patients, physicians, and caregivers wherever and whenever they need it.

servicesmix

Interactive	70%
Media	16%
Video	7%
Print	7%

clientroster

(Note: Digitas Health did not provide an accounts-roster breakdown)

- AstraZeneca Plc.**
- Bristol-Myers Squibb Co.**
- Merck & Co.**
- Novo Nordisk Inc.**
- Pfizer Inc.**
- Roche**
- Sanofi-Aventis**
- Wyeth**

For a detailed listing of account rosters, including brand assignments for the healthcare ad agencies, log on to pharmalive.com/specialreports.



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Created for Digitas Health client AstraZeneca, CelebrationChain.com allows people to create and send a celebratory message about a breast cancer survivor and has earned national media and blogger attention.