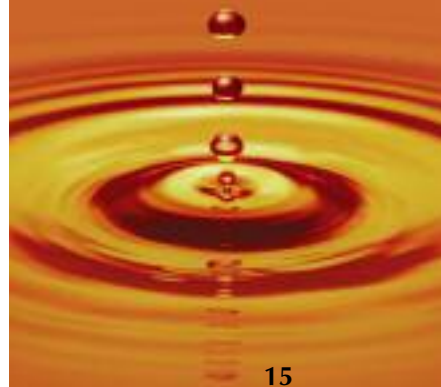


Phase V Vice-President and General Manager Allan Portwine and Creative Director Eric Care.

*Phase V's current branding and advertising has been called everything from "edgy" to "way out there." While they appreciate all the attention, Allan Portwine, Vice-President and General Manager of the Montreal-based healthcare agency asserts that there is a solid rationale behind the principles of the corporate theme and credo and insists that it was only partly designed to create intrigue. Mr. Portwine and some of his colleagues recently agreed to sit down and describe in some detail the thoughts behind the **Blood, Sweat and Tears**.*

“The breadth and depth of our team is our life-blood.”

**BLOOD
SWEAT
TEARS**



BLOOD: THE OBJECT OF SCIENCE

In pharmaceutical marketing, producing impactful creative is only half the battle. Just as vital is an agency's ability to contribute valuable direction in developing effective strategies and defining key messages. Once a strategy is in place, a good agency should follow through with tactical options—including print, media and interactive—that reach the desired target audience. The key is having the right people to do the job.

“Our strategic team is drawn from a variety of backgrounds. Our expertise is in pharmaceutical marketing, but our competencies include medical science, market research, retail pharmacy, sales, multimedia, publishing and direct marketing. That range brings something invaluable to the table. In essence, the breadth and depth of our team is our life-blood,” says Allan Portwine.

“An individual product manager may have worked on three or four brands in the span of a 10 year career. Together, our team has worked on 40 or 50 brands, which translates into a lot of perspective and know-how, especially when it comes to providing clients with opportunities to do things in novel, original ways.”

SWEAT: THE GREASE OF CREATIVITY

Asiyah Rehman, Account Director:

“I'd say there's a healthy dose of friction between our creative and account groups. After all, deadlines don't always coincide with inspiration. But friction works for us more than against us. Challenging each other helps us stay fresh and on top of things.”



Some members of the Phase V Account Services Team.

“I think consistency is important to clients. Once we've established a working relationship, I tend to keep the same team involved with the brand. They brainstorm together and challenge each other, in the same way that we challenge clients. The payoff is that we find a broad range of ideas and more potential for innovation.

“Eventually, we really get inside the heads of our clients and we come to know exactly what's in the best interest of their brand.”

To create optimal conditions for success, a client should have access to senior agency people at every step of the process when developing and implementing a new campaign. Why? Because senior people have the confidence to challenge clients, to help them see the marketing landscape from a fresh perspective and to guide them towards the most effective use of their advertising dollars.

“The payoff is that we find a broad range of ideas and more potential for innovation.”

Allan Portwine:

“Phase V clients know that we are always just a phone call away. We sometimes invite clients to our offices just for the sake of getting them out of their day-to-day environments. Face-to-face meetings in our offices are often the most productive sessions.”

“We have a strong team and we compliment each other. The foundation for excellence is in place and our people are ready to go to extraordinary lengths to produce outstanding work, on time, on budget and with the fewest possible hassles for clients. Our clients quickly learn to appreciate that and come to expect it—and we believe they deserve no less from each and every one of us.”

Being innovative is important enough when you're promoting a breakthrough or one-of-a-kind product, but when you're trying to get your brand to stand out in a crowded field, innovative strategy and brilliant creative are absolutely essential.

TEARS: THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTION

Eric Caire, Vice-President and Creative Director:

“I get a real kick out of injecting a campaign with a brilliant and innovative creative concept. For a concept to be great it must have **stopping power**. The problem with most ads is not that they are not read entirely, but that they are entirely ignored. Impact is generated by demanding reader participation...by provoking emotions, arousing curiosity, challenging preconceptions. A great concept must also have **simplicity**. Less is more. A great concept relies on a strong, simple yet unexpected proposition. The creative process, like the strategic process, must converge on a single claim, so that the concept conveys an equally singular idea.”



Some of the members of the Phase V Creative Team, as well as Production Services.

“We know when the central idea is great because its expression in the creative concept engages us and moves us emotionally.”

Eric brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and talent to every project that he is involved in. His 20 years of creative directing for major agencies in both consumer and healthcare services has earned him a series of national and international awards which, although he doesn't accord them much importance himself, are a measure of his unswerving dedication to creative excellence.

“A great concept is one that engages us and moves us emotionally.”

THE GLOBAL CONNECTION

Phase V's association with Grey Healthcare Worldwide offers clients the potential for global exposure. In conjunction with Grey Worldwide, Phase V can coordinate strategy, unify branding and synchronize public relations events across oceans and continents. But when it comes to creative strategy, concepts and execution, the shoe has occasionally been on the other foot, with Grey Worldwide relying on Phase V for global applications.

CASES IN POINT:

- The European head office of a major Canadian pharmaceutical company adopts corporate branding developed by Phase V for an international launch
- In conjunction with Grey Worldwide, Phase V develops clinical trial recruitment materials to be used in North America, Europe, Asia and Africa
- An innovative Phase V “rapid uptake” physician kit is implemented in a world product launch

THE UPSIDE OF REGULATION

Due to severe restraints imposed by government regulators, the challenge in direct-to-patient marketing is to find inventive ways of getting the message across.

Allan Portwine:

“The search for innovative ways of reaching consumers and prescribers in Canada is a reflection of the degree to which our industry is regulated. Regulation need not be seen as a negative. Because our messages and ways of doing business are so strictly controlled, most physicians have confidence in the accuracy of our claims. In fact, a healthy side-effect of regulation is that we provide physicians with concise, accurate information about the latest developments in the industry—information they might otherwise not have time to access. As such, we are an integral and necessary part of the healthcare community, not separate from it.

We know what doctors and other members of the healthcare community need to know about pharmaceutical products and services and we also know how best to communicate that information to them.”



Some of the Phase V Team.

ON RESPONSIBLE ADVERTISING

Clients have to live with the work their agency provides for months or years. Beyond the all-important bottom line, we all want to feel proud of our brands. In the final analysis, an agency's success boils down to making clients look good.

Is there an inherent contradiction between the need for accurate, actionable information and marketing success? We don't think so. We believe responsible advertising results in a win-win situation, where sales rise along with physician and consumer confidence.

“Responsible advertising results in a win-win situation, where sales rise along with physician and consumer confidence.”

ON THE VIRTUE OF MODESTY

Is there room for modesty in this business? Yes, mixed with equal parts confidence and pride. Is the truth completely relative? No. As a communications agency, we have a responsibility to consumers and healthcare professionals, as well as to our clients.

As you read this article, you might want to take a moment and ask yourself how your agency measures up against Phase V: Does your agency challenge you? Are you getting the kind of service you deserve? Is their output consistently dependable? Is your marketing campaign a success?

Allan Portwine:

“Against these measures, Phase V has a pretty solid track record, judging from client feedback and the calls we've been getting, to present credentials. We are growing, slowly but steadily, mainly because the volume of business awarded by our existing clients has increased. This speaks volumes for our talent and for our integrity.”

ON FUTURE DIRECTIONS

When asked to offer his outlook over the next few years, for Phase V and for the healthcare market, Allan was reluctant to jump in. “I certainly don't have a crystal ball and there are almost limitless variables in play—from the state of government regulation, the public health system and changing demographics, to the impact of international head office decisions on Canadian subsidiaries.”

“One positive development is my feeling that we might be beginning to see a gradual reversal of this trend toward global branding and marketing. Some pharmaceutical companies are beginning to see the limitations of a ‘one-size-fits-all’ initiative. They seem to be coming around again toward teaming with local partners. There are definite advantages to developing marketing strategies and creating home-grown campaigns that resonate in our market and are compatible with Canada's regulatory climate. That would certainly be good news for Phase V.”

WRAPPING IT UP

Phase V has a solid foundation of expertise and experience in pharmaceutical marketing. The goal is to build on its base of clients in both Montreal and Toronto and to continue exploring new approaches to marketing, guided by the principles embodied in *Blood, Sweat and Tears*.