

Unique Solutions

Sudler & Hennessey's Success Explained

Creative staff, consistent quality, strong communications and striking graphics form the basis of Sudler & Hennessey's award-winning approach to advertising.

Christopher Dean, General Manager for Canadian Operations, shares his philosophy on running a successful agency.



Christopher Dean
General Manager for Canadian Operations, Sudler & Hennessey

You were recently made General Manager for Canadian Operations at Sudler & Hennessey (S&H). Given your recent promotion, what changes can we expect to see?

Throughout my career I've worked to build solid teams made up of strong, well-qualified individuals. We've made good progress in the past year and will continue to build and strengthen our organization for the future.

We must remain at the forefront when it comes to developing new service offerings. We did this in the

past when we founded a highly successful continuing health education (CHE) division, IntraMed Health Services, in Toronto and more recently in Montreal. We are committed to this course of action in the future. In addition, being part of the highly successful S&H global network means we can take advantage of the advances they have already made in developing emerging service offerings in areas such as e-business.

Sudler & Hennessey recently won several awards in the Global Awards Competition and from the Rx Club. What makes your agency and your advertising campaigns stand out above the rest?

We're very proud of the recognition our work has received from the Rx Club of New York, London International and The Global Awards Competition, with over 25 wins over the past three years.

We believe that the compelling power of the graphic element continues to distinguish our work and is the reason our campaigns stand out. We make a deliberate effort to create stopping power using memorable graphic solutions that often break from pharmaceutical norms.

Consistency also makes S&H work stand out from the rest. Whether it's the biggest client or the smallest, a large budget or low budget, we consistently deliver. We offer our clients a broad range of print and electronic vehicles. We work in print with journal ads, selling aids, physician tools, logo design and corporate brochures. We use electronic media through television commercials and videos. We specialize in craftsmanship in photography and computerized special effects. In spite of the breadth of our reach, there is a con-

Sudler & Hennessey

Career Focus

Christopher Dean tells us about his ascent to General Manager for Canadian Operations at Sudler & Hennessey



I've been fortunate to have had a career that has given me a wide range of experience in a number of industries in different parts of the world.

I was raised in Quebec but attended university in Ontario (Queen's University and the University of Western Ontario). After a false start in banking, I joined Sandoz Canada as Operations Manager of the Industrial Chemical Division. This led to a rotation to the head office in Switzerland, followed by three years in England, which provided me with both sales and marketing experience and paved the way for a return to Canada in 1982 as Chief Operating Officer of the chemical business.

My next and most significant career move took place in 1986 with a transfer within Sandoz to the Pharmaceutical Division as Vice-President, Sales and Marketing. This was followed in 1990 by a move to Nordic Labs which became MMD and then HMR again as Vice-President, Sales and Marketing.

In late 1994 HMR bought Clinidata, a health-care informatics company with expertise in physician desktop systems and call centres, where I assumed the role as President. Clinidata was sold by HMR in 1998. I remained with the company, and the new owners, until the end of 1999. In April 2000, I joined Sudler & Hennessey as General Manager, Quebec, and in March 2001, was appointed General Manager for Canadian Operations.

sistency that spans virtually every creative discipline for virtually every client, year after year.

We've also concentrated on hiring creative staff with a multidisciplinary approach. We hire people with

backgrounds in consumer advertising, graphic design and pharma advertising. We believe that if you want to stand out from the crowd you have to provide unique solutions.

Over the last several years, there have been some big changes in the way pharmaceutical advertisers have been reaching physicians. How has Sudler & Hennessey dealt with these changes?

There is a much broader range of communications being used by pharmaceutical companies than ever before. While face-to-face visits between pharmaceutical sales representatives and physicians are still a very effective way to promote to this important client group, the customer base must now include governments, third-party payers, patients, caregivers, advocacy groups, and others. This calls for a disciplined and integrated approach to the market that involves pre-launch programs, market access programs, compliance programs, etc. Skills required now include expertise in areas such as CHE, public relations, direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising and e-business. S&H is well-prepared to deliver in these areas.

Can we expect further changes in the future?

e-Business is still in its early stages and is likely to be the one area in which dramatic change and results will occur in the future.

What is your opinion of direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription products?

I strongly believe that consumers want, and need, to take a more active role in managing their own health decisions. Providing information to consumers so they can become better informed about medical conditions, treatment options and side effects, and aware of the appropriate questions to ask physicians is essential. For patients to be able to work in partnership with health-care providers to ensure the appropriate use of prescription drugs—the right drug at the right time—they need to be well-informed. DTC campaigns can help provide much of this information. In addition, hopefully, Health Canada will change the Food and Drug Act to allow Canadians access to information from

Canadian sources, information they can already access from sites around the world.

How does Sudler & Hennessey brand products for its clients?

We believe in a strong branding approach for our clients' products. There is no set formula for the branding process. Just as with people, products take on unique personalities. We start by identifying influencing factors such as product attributes, the therapeutic area, competition and company culture. Once a personality is created, we can develop the best branding strategy for that particular product. It can be a strong iconographic branding campaign, or a look and feel for the brand through a repetition of colors and imagery. But once the appropriate branding approach is determined, we remain focused and consistent in our execution of the campaign to create the best possible synergy of all the tactical elements.

What does your agency do to maintain a productive relationship with its clients?

By far, the most important component of a good relationship with a client is great two-way communication. In an era where all organizations are running as lean as they can and finding time to talk to people is difficult, communicating well is a challenge—but it is becoming more and more essential to building a productive relationship. This is an area that has our constant attention. You cannot produce winning campaigns for clients without a clear understanding of your clients' needs.

An example of our efforts in this area is a seminar program we have developed to facilitate the communication process. We have conducted this seminar, "How to Recognize Great Advertising," for pharmaceutical marketing professionals in both Montreal and Toronto once a year for the past three years. In it, participants acquire and appreciation for:

- The elements of, and vocabulary for, developing and evaluating journal ads;
- How the principles of ad design work on a practical level;
- Discussing, evaluating and critiquing ad concepts; and

- The ad development process inside the agency. This is all done with a view to improving our communication with our clients and in doing so building a productive relationship. Other Sudler & Hennessey seminars on branding and strategy are available.

What does the future hold for your agency?

We truly believe we have a great future ahead of us. As a company, we are experiencing a strong growth phase and we believe we have the drive and new ideas to keep it going. In a very competitive environment you cannot stand still. We are committed to a course of action that will enable us to continually strengthen our organization so that we remain top of mind when health-care clients consider communication agencies.

CPM