

AGENCY

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TRACKING DOWN THE BEST AGENCY... FOR YOU

A SUPPLEMENT TO
**Pharmaceutical
Executive**



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Agencies Are Talking About

To find out what was happening at healthcare agencies at this crucial point in time for the industry, we interrogated 25 executives at some of the nation's most successful agencies and networks. We didn't want to know about their campaigns, or even about their agencies per se (that information can be found on their Web sites, listed here). What we wanted was their insights into the rapidly changing landscape of pharma marketing.

We asked them the following 9 questions. The surprise was how generous and forthcoming they were with their answers. We only wish we had more space so we could have printed everything they had to share. Instead, we culled the most cogent and timely of their comments and put together a kind of "Facebook." We believe it makes for interesting reading as well as being a useful guide to what the thinking is behind the agency you might be considering.

- In the past advertising agencies meant creative. Now it seems creative is implicit, and agencies are being asked for a broader range of services. What do agencies have to offer clients?
- What is at the top of your list of things companies should do to promote their brands more effectively, and responsibly?
- Is pharma's tightening its belt affecting the way it's doing business with agencies? Is pharma asking for more, and wanting to pay less? How do you deal with that?
- The industry says it's finally interested in Web 2.0, but the spend-online numbers for 2007 don't agree. What then do clients really want, and how do you advise them?
- What is an agency's responsibility when it comes to being cognizant of and complying with regulations?
- As companies increasingly look to biologics to feed their dwindling pipelines, what new challenges will these medicines pose for agencies?
- What are one or two things you know about pharma marketing that companies don't seem to be aware of?
- What will healthcare advertising look like five years from now?
- What should a client do to get the very best value out of working with an agency like yours?



Name: Risa Bernstein

Rank: Managing Partner and Co-President

Agency: Flashpoint Medica

“Trust is one of the great intangibles in the agency-client relationship. It probably affects the choice of an agency in the first place. With trust comes loyalty, and with loyalty comes a willingness to take the kinds of risks that lead to truly breakthrough ideas, without fear of penalty and failure.

Communication is another secret to maximizing agency value. And I define maximizing agency value as consistently innovating differentiating ideas that drive products and markets. The more a client takes the time to communicate about not only the brand and the market, but also about the company culture, processes, people, expectations, likes, dislikes, business philosophy, past success, past failure, etc., the more an agency can deliver on expectations.

Clients and their Agencies must be flexible with one another. Especially since they often work through the tedium of tight timelines and tight budgets. Appreciation also informs the best team relationships. There is no substitute for members generously sharing their observations of a job well done, a great idea, an ingenious innovation, or a can-do attitude.

Listening to another point of view, really hearing it, is pivotal to building team and producing great work. When one person (or side) of a relationship comes to the table with a fixed and unmovable viewpoint, a disservice is done to the creative process. Spirited debate is the fuel that drives great thinking, and open minds are wide windows to new and differentiating ideas.

The Skinny

Flashpoint, a full-service healthcare communications agency, is three years old and has roped in such megabrands as Herceptin, Avastin (managed care), and the Cypher drug-eluting stent.

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