

ONES TO WATCH

Several smaller agencies have been making a big splash over the past year. **Stephen McGuire** charts the progress of four — 6-year-old Wishbone/ITP and start-ups Flashpoint Medica, The Navicor Group and Stonefly Communications Group.

Wishbone/ITP

The past year has been “fantastic” for New York-based Wishbone/ITP, according to founding partner and chief executive Steven Michaelson.

“Our 2004 revenues grew by 70 percent from \$5 million to \$9 million,” he says. “And in 2005 one of our products, [cholesterol drug] Entera from Reliant, was our first launch. It’s a very big thing for us to launch our first product.” The agency also won Abbott’s bipolar disorder and seizure therapy Depakote, its first billion-dollar brand.

Wishbone was founded in 1998 and has grown into a force as a medium-sized agency. Despite increasing staff from 29 to 43 in 2004, Michaelson says the firm’s secret to success is not getting too big. “We don’t want to be the biggest, we want to be the best. What’s important is that we manage our existing business.”

Michaelson believes that as a smaller player Wishbone can offer its clients a better service. “We don’t have a lot of people wearing a lot of different hats,” he says. “We have seasoned professionals. Our

clients are used to dealing with the top level and that’s the benefit of dealing with an independent agency. They are not dealing with a 25-year-old who is new to the business.”

Flashpoint Medica

Seasoned healthcare advertising executive Charlene Proulx teamed with her former Accel partner Risa Bernstein and industry veteran Helen Applebaum to form Flashpoint Medica in March 2005. The eight-person brand-development agency focuses on the critical moments (“flashpoints”) of a product’s life cycle and maxi-

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