

Administrative Practice and Procedure in the Senate. He helped draft the federal Privacy Act, the Sunshine Act and various amendments to the Freedom of Information Act. He also worked on the rule that led to the creation of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

In 1979, the office of Sen. John Culver of Iowa sought out Davidson to become head of the senator's subcommittee (under the Judiciary Committee) on administrative practice and procedure. (Working for Culver proved to be a smart decision, as noted above, in that it helped Davidson become closer with Sen. Kennedy and his staffers. Culver and Kennedy were roommates and teammates while students at Harvard).



Paul Silverman of Novartis presents Jim Davidson of Polsinelli with his award for the DTC Hall of Fame.

It was almost 10 years later in 1986 that Davidson departed the Senate to establish his own Washington firm, Davidson & Company which became closely associated over the next few years with advertising issues. Davidson used his work with

advertisers as a springboard to creating The Advertising Coalition, a consortium of media companies, advertising groups and publishers that set out to fight any efforts to tax advertising spend in major media channels. This battle against an ad-tax continues to this day, and was recently reignited with Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-Ill.) suggested that pharmaceutical companies would have to choose between either taking advertising spending or research and development investment as a business expense, but not both. (Emanuel, after making this pronouncement in a meeting with an advertising group in September, was called upon by President-elect Barack Obama to become his new chief of staff).

### Change in House committee leadership

One of the first challenges Davidson will confront in 2009 will be the change in leadership of the House's Committee on Energy and Commerce. In November, Rep. Waxman challenged and defeated the longtime chairman of this committee, Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.). Rep. Waxman has been actively opposed to consumer marketing of prescription drugs, and is

likely to continue his efforts in this area in the next session of Congress.

Asked about the change in leadership on the Energy and Commerce Committee (which has oversight of the FDA), Davidson said he told a group of clients, "You have to understand that Rep. Dingell was criticizing prescription drug advertising long before Rep. Waxman started doing it...The one big difference (between the two representatives) is that we could not get Rep. Waxman to accept the proposal for an administrative process to review advertising backed up with civil monetary penalties to sanction false or misleading advertising. Rep. Dingell saw quickly how [the penalties] could be used by FDA to penalize bad advertising.

Perhaps a more critical issue for Davidson in the coming year will be the attempt to limit DTC by way of an advertising tax, or a change in government reimbursement policy for the drugs it purchases under various programs, including Medicare Part D.

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In 2009, legislation could be introduced that would change the way pharmaceutical manufacturers who advertise drugs are reimbursed by the government. Davidson noted that former Rep. Bill Thomas (now retired) proposed something along these lines a few years ago when he was chairman of the House's Ways and Means Committee. The Thomas proposal had three different options: No. 1, change the rate of reimbursement for drugs that are popularly advertised; No. 2, change the co-pay so that patients are discouraged from choosing drugs that are popularly advertised; and No. 3, the government could change the tax treatment for the business expense related to advertising drugs that are purchased under Medicare Part D coverage. "All of those were options that Rep. Thomas looked at, and he was a Republican," Davidson noted. "There's no reason to think that any of those options will be left on the table." ■

## Build a Career in DTC, Medical Advertising

A "little bit of luck and circumstance" helped Matt Giegerich get his start in the world of medical advertising. He subsequently built on that good fortune and teamed with the marketers at Schering-Plough to put together a campaign for Claritin that set the early standard for DTC advertising.

By Jennifer Haug



MATT GIEGERICH

Matt Giegerich, currently the president and chief executive of the healthcare marketing and advertising group CommonHealth, has a career spanning nearly two decades, and a record that's filled with numerous contributions to direct-to-consumer advertising, among other notable accomplishments.

For his long record of achievement in the consumer marketing of pharmaceutical products, DTC Perspectives in August named Giegerich and three other DTC pioneers to its new DTC Hall of Fame. The magazine's editors subsequently sat down with the Hall of Fame inductee to discuss his career and how he got started in the advertising and healthcare sectors.

Giegerich's career began as a "form of destiny, with a little bit of luck and circumstance," he recalled in the interview. As a young boy, he knew he wanted to be in the advertising business. He grew up admiring Darrin Stephens of the popular television show "Bewitched," about an advertising executive working in Manhattan. Loosely following in the footsteps of his TV idol, he began to pursue a career in advertising by securing an internship during his sophomore year of college at Dugan/Farley Communications, a healthcare advertising agency founded by a friend's father, Pat Dugan. That internship quickly presented Giegerich with the opportunity of a full-time position, and introduced him to his first professional mentor, Pat Dugan. Dugan's mentoring helped "lay the foundation" for Giegerich's career in pharmaceutical marketing.

After working at Dugan's firm for a few years, in 1991 Giegerich left to take a senior account executive role within Ferguson, part of Ferguson Communications Group [which, once merged with medical education group Health Learning Systems (HLS), would soon become the CommonHealth organization]. It was there where he found two additional

mentors, John Zweig, the company's president, and Tom Ferguson, the company's founder and chief executive. Giegerich said Zweig was important for helping to expand his horizons, which in turn helped him develop as a marketer, an agency person and a creative thinker. Ferguson, he said, gave him a "different perspective, one focused on the importance of establishing and cultivating relationships within the industry. Both were very important in helping me learn about the business of our business, especially during those early years."

A few years into his tenure at CommonHealth, he was tapped as an integral part of the team that would launch the allergy treatment Claritin, a campaign that included the first major broadcast television campaign targeted to consumers. Giegerich described it as a time "where the blockbuster drug era was just about to burst wide open. [With] big product introductions, targeting, mass markets – usually primary-care oriented markets – billion-dollar drugs were suddenly not only possible, but talked about and even expected from many manufacturers. Schering-Plough was of course one of them with the launch of the Claritin brand."

### A new level of consumer engagement

Schering-Plough and Claritin were in a good position in the marketplace. Some competitors had received black-box warnings on their products and consumers were looking for non-sedating antihistamines. Claritin was an approved, non-sedating antihistamine with a clean side-effect profile. And, perhaps most importantly, the Schering-Plough marketing mindset was "very aggressive, experimental and willing to try new things," Giegerich said. Other external factors in the marketplace helped Claritin grow, such as people being more proactive about managing their health and the rise of consumerization. This



presented new opportunities for marketers, allowing them to “reach and connect with consumers in a much more complete and targeted way,” he noted.

The new level of engagement attempted by Claritin was viewed a success. Those early campaigns, now simply considered “reminder ads,” created a “very clear, compelling promise” that helped convert users of over-the-counter remedies to a prescription medication, usually a difficult



Denise Campbell (right) of AstraZeneca presents Matt Giegerich of CommonHealth with his DTC Hall of Fame award.

feat. “It worked very well and the success followed quickly in terms of share and sales,” Giegerich said of the early Claritin consumer campaigns. “That fueled the company’s aggressiveness and willingness to experiment further.”

He added, “There was a brief period of experimentation with broadcast which yielded such immediate results that greater dollars were

poured into the media plan. Pretty soon we had a fairly massive, concurrent, integrated campaign on every front – print, radio, television, outdoor, relationship marketing and a beginning presence on the Internet.”

Once the FDA guidelines were changed in 1997 to allow claims-based advertising to be made in association with a brand name – and other brands (such as competing allergy treatments Allegra and Zyrtec) emerged in the market – Schering-Plough became even more competitive and committed to remaining the antihistamine frontrunner.

The Claritin brand team originally partnered with professional advertising agency Ferguson in the early to mid-1990s to help bring the drug to market. The consumer portion of the account was ultimately moved to sibling agency The Quantum Group, an off-shoot of Ferguson created in 1996 as the first stand-alone DTC agency, with Giegerich at its helm. The brand team for Claritin worked with a number of healthcare communications groups to continue its success – with Quantum handling the consumer marketing, Ferguson working on the professional marketing and HLS on the patient education platform. “It was really not just a good example of consumer marketing, but of fully integrated marketing on virtually every front,” Giegerich said. “It was one effort that, to this day, we are still very proud of as a kind of a forerunner to how a brand can be truly integrated across every audience and marketing channel.”



## “The right mix of talent, chemistry”

After heading The Quantum Group for two years, Giegerich helped re-launch and preside over The Xchange Group, a relationship marketing agency under the CommonHealth umbrella. He subsequently became one of three managing partners at CommonHealth before being named president and chief executive in 2000. During his career with CommonHealth, Giegerich was directly involved in launches for Avandia, Claritin, Crestor, Levitra, Symbicort and Elidel. He also helped in the campaign development for the Rx brands Ortho Evra, Aldara, NuvaRing and Fluvirin, as well as products from Myriad Genetics.

Giegerich is quick to share credit for his successes. He considers the executive team he works with now to be his greatest achievement. “It has been a constant journey looking for exactly the right mix of talent, chemistry and comradery. I feel like I’m at a point – and we’re at a point – where all of those things have never been better, or more aligned, inside this company. So for the moment, that is by far the thing I’m most proud of: recognizing how much of a journey it is to assemble a really, truly great team. To feel like I have had a hand in that is something I’m very proud of.”

While most chief executives in the WPP Group (the marketing services holding company that owns CommonHealth) typically hold their posts for two to three years, Giegerich has been proudly reporting to Sir Martin Sorrell for more than seven years. Even after such an accomplished record, Giegerich said he still tries to set new goals for himself and the agencies he oversees. With a mind that never rests, and a sincere drive to contribute in meaningful ways, Giegerich also said he would like to invent something that could one day prove beneficial to many. “Despite my best efforts at times, I’ve never been the type to be able to relax and shut off my mind. I’m always thinking “What if we did this? Or built that? Or started this?”

For those entering today’s DTC environment, Giegerich would advise that “consumerization is not a fad and it’s not subject to regulatory concerns. We should all feel, and I don’t mean this lightly, proud of the idea that what we’re doing is helping educate consumers and patients about their options in healthcare and in their pursuit in health and wellness.”

While the environment for the consumer marketing of pharmaceutical products will continue to fluctuate, Giegerich said he believes this form of communication meets a need and that “consumers need and want information. They deserve that information and they deserve it from a trusted source. [DTC], at its core, is helping people to fulfill their lives and can help them understand their healthcare options and motivated them toward even better choices.” ■

