

Rethink Research Awards

By Norman M. Goldfarb

Rethink Research announced the winners of its competition to rebrand the clinical research enterprise at MAGI’s Clinical Research Conference in San Diego, October 12, 2015:

ClinEdge won the awards for Best Overall, People’s Choice, and Best Concept with its entry: Side effects may include.

MMG won the awards for Best Copy and Best Campaign Design with its entry: Missing U.

DAC Patient Recruitment Services won the award for Best Headline with its entry: Clinical research for your future, and hers.

The Patient Recruiting Agency won the award for best graphical design with its entry: Remedi THIS.

Please offer your congratulations to the winners. Contact information is below.

Feedback

Voters for the People’s Choice award provided valuable comments that apply not just to the Rethink Research entries, but to patient recruiting ads in general. The following conclusions can be reached:

- The clinical research enterprise has compelling messages.
- The bigger the picture, the better.
- Clarity and emotional connection are key.
- Sophisticated or indirect messages might not be understood.
- Need to address diversity in age, gender, ethnicity, education and socioeconomics.
- Ads that are effective in the U.S. might not be effective in other countries.
- Individual advertisements need to be considered in the context of an entire advertising campaign, including multiple ads.
- Reactions vary, so one ad can’t please everyone.
- Testing is essential.

Usage of Entries

Entries are available under a Creative Commons license for royalty-free use, with credit to the creator for two years (until October 13, 2017). Submissions might include third-party images that would need a separate license. Contact contestants for access to the original graphics files:

- **ClinEdge**
Christian Burns, Director of Clinical Operations and Marketing
857.496.0054, christian@clin-edge.com
- **DAC Patient Recruitment Services**
Melynda Geurtz, VP, Operations
469.916.8636, mgeurts@dacprs.com

- **MMG**
Helen West, President
301.348.1652, hwest@mmgct.com
- **The Patient Recruiting Agency**
Lance Nickens, President
512.345.7788, lance@tprausa.com

Background

Recruiting patients for clinical research studies is getting harder and harder every year, making medical progress harder and harder. Many people have a skeptical or negative attitude toward clinical research. Although the press often reports positive findings from clinical research, negative news stories tend to get the headlines, to say nothing of the portrayals of “villainous” clinical researchers and pharmaceutical companies in movies, television shows, books, etc.

The clinical research enterprise does very little to combat these negative stereotypes. The Center for Information & Study on Clinical Research Participation (CISRCP) is dedicated to educating both patients and the public about clinical research participation, but its resources are limited.

Back in 1983, the milk industry recognized that it had a problem. Milk consumption was declining as the public consumed more exciting beverages. To fight back, the industry created the “Got Milk?” advertising campaign, a series of ads unified by the “Got Milk?” slogan. The rest is history.

At a conference earlier this year, Joe Kim challenged the clinical research industry to rebrand itself. Just as the milk industry rebranded milk as a hip beverage, can we rebrand clinical research in a way that deeply resonates with the public? Can we change the man on the street’s answer to: “Funny you should ask. I’ve heard good things about clinical research. I really should find a study that’s right for me.”

The Rethink Research Competition

The first step in rebranding clinical research is to create a “Got Milk?” advertising concept for clinical research. To accomplish this objective, Rethink Research invited patient recruiting firms to contribute their ideas for a campaign concept to achieve the following objectives:

- Generate ideas for promoting participation in clinical research.
- Create materials that study sponsors, etc., can adapt.
- Generate awareness in the industry of the branding issue and create momentum for it.

The entries are at http://www.magiworld.org/rethink_short (short version) and at http://www.magiworld.org/rethink_long (long version). “They are a testament to the passion that engages our colleagues and the creativity they can deliver to meet an important challenge,” said Adam Chasse, president of OnPoint CRO.

Clinical research professionals and the general public were invited to vote for the People’s Choice Award. A panel of judges also assessed the entries. The judges included:

- Adam Chasse, President, OnPoint CRO
- Norman M. Goldfarb, Chairman, MAGI

- Diane Gross, National Program Director, Lupus Research Institute, S.L.E. Lupus Foundation
- Joseph Kim, Senior Advisor, Clinical Innovation, Eli Lilly and Company
- Jill McNair, Director of Education, Outreach and Community Support, CISCRP

The Rethink Research competition is just the first step in a long journey to open people's minds to clinical research. Without clinical research, without study participants, there would be no new medicines, no new medical devices, no new diagnostics. That's not a world we can live in, literally. Suggestions for next steps are invited.

Author

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