

## CASE STUDY

# Frontier Service Design Helps Complete

Healthcare Communications Turn Internal Cost Center Into New Revenue Source

### background

Complete Healthcare Communications, Inc. (CHC) is a publication planning and scientific medical writing firm based in Chadds Ford, PA that has been servicing the top pharmaceutical firms and brands since 1994. With more than 115 professionals, CHC employs one of the largest, in-house medical writing staffs in the industry. The company is a top performer in its industry. But that did not keep Bob Norris, founder and CEO, from wanting to explore new ways in which to grow the company.

"I had been very focused on building a best-of-breed medical communications company, but as I looked around the pharmaceutical and broader life sciences industry, I wondered if there were other opportunities for our firm," explained Mr. Norris.

### understanding the business

As part of their standard service design process, Bob Cooper of Frontier Service Design worked with CHC's senior management team to assess the organization's internal strengths. As part of this process, Frontier examined the current services that CHC provided to its clients, the relationships they had with those clients and trends in the pharmaceutical industry. In addition, Frontier identified the assets that the company had, in the form of knowledge and technology. Frontier was asked to evaluate the value and commercialization potential of an internal database that had been built by CHC employees over the years as a potential new revenue opportunity. The database had been used as a tool by CHC's account teams to track peer-reviewed medical journals around the world.

CHC works with its clients to disseminate validated scientific data to peer-reviewed medical journals and meetings. These highly specialized research articles and presentations are published in any one of over 5,300 peer-reviewed journals or medical meetings around the



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world. Best known are journals like the New England Journal of Medicine, or the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). But in fact, a particular research project might be better served by being disseminated in one of the many other peer-reviewed journals around the world, many of which are targeted to highly-focused specialties.

## uncovering the opportunity

For years, CHC has handled the time-consuming task of tracking all of these journals and medical meetings in an in-house database, diligently tracking publishing criteria, editorial contacts, publishing calendars, and a wide variety of other specialty criteria. According to Mr. Norris, “This database was a core component of our planning process, and we dedicated personnel focused on updating and maintaining the data. For us, it was a necessary cost of doing business.”

To further validate their assumptions about this database and its ability to drive revenue for CHC, Frontier Service Design interviewed potential customers from both within CHC’s core market of large pharmaceutical manufacturers, as well as ancillary markets such as small biotech firms, universities, research institutions, etc. Feedback from these prospects, as well as research into similar products showed that CHC was, in fact, unique. While there were similar databases for consumer and business publications, very few options existed for this market. Once the business opportunity was confirmed, Frontier began to outline the functionality that would be needed for external users and worked with CHC’s internal technical team to build a Web-based application that would deliver the database and track subscribers.

Frontier also established the name and brand identity - PubsHub.com - and also designed the marketing launch of the product including a direct mail campaign, public relations, and an opt-in email program. Based on their research, Frontier determined that an annual subscription rate of \$4,995 was the ideal price-point for this particular market and this type of specialized data. A 30-day free trial offers potential subscribers the opportunity to “test drive” the data, with over half of those choosing to ultimately subscribe. To date, over 85% of subscribers renew their subscriptions each year.

A big part of that growth has come from the company’s leadership “knowing what they don’t know” and being willing to ask questions like, “What if?”

## solution

Beyond creating a new revenue stream from what was once perceived as a cost of doing business, CHC also recognized the following benefits:

- ▶ Both subscribers and journal publishers are proactively adding and editing content, which makes the PubsHub database all the more robust.
- ▶ They have also expanded their visibility beyond just the largest pharmaceutical manufacturers to a broad base of companies and organizations involved in the broader life science industry.
- ▶ Clients recognize CHC for bringing market-specific and useful tools to help them do their jobs more efficiently.

Today, Complete Healthcare Communications continues to grow in their market. A big part of that growth has come from the company’s leadership “knowing what they don’t know” and being willing to ask questions like, “What if?”