



NOVO NORDISK RETAINS CAUSEMEDIA

by Dan Perkins



Gittens

Donna Gittens, president and founder of Boston-based causemedia, a marketing and communications firm, has been selected by Danish pharmaceutical giant Novo Nordisk, a leader in diabetes treatment, to develop messages and program materials for the company's newly launched Diverse Supplier Initiative (DSI).

Under the agreement, causemedia will develop internal and external messages designed to broaden the company's utilization of Diverse Suppliers.

"We're pleased to leverage the expertise of Donna Gittens and her team as we continue to lay the foundation for a world-class supplier diversity program," said Bill Hooker, senior manager for DSI. "We have been very deliberate in our selection of top-tier consultants as we launch our program, and we welcome causemedia to our team."

Retaining causemedia is the latest in a series of bold moves by Novo Nordisk as it integrates supplier diversity into its buying processes.

Novo Nordisk first began its program-building efforts in 2008 by retaining RGMA, Inc., a diverse, Chicago-based consulting firm specializing in the development of supplier diversity programs. [Dan Perkins, publisher of diversityinbusiness.com, is a strategic partner to RGMA and a member of the consulting team assisting Novo Nordisk with its Diverse Supplier Initiative.]

"We appreciate RGMA's introduction to causemedia," said Hooker who assumed responsibility for DSI in 2009.

RGMA's referral came while Novo Nordisk was interviewing minority- and women-owned agencies to support DSI. RGMA was familiar with causemedia through the America's Best Diverse Suppliers (ABDS) Program, which is hosted by diversityinbusiness.com. The ABDS Program provides Major League Baseball with a third-party platform to recognize outstanding participants in its highly-decorated Diverse Business Partners (DBP) Program.

In 2008, causemedia was one of six minority- and women-owned businesses recognized as America's Best Diverse Suppliers by the Boston Red Sox. That year, during pre-game ceremonies at Fenway Park, the Red Sox also honored causemedia with MLB's Jackie Robinson Most Valuable Partner Award.

While awards and corporate endorsements are valuable assets for smaller companies seeking new business, for Gittens and her team, the engagement with Novo Nordisk came as a prized addition to the agency's already impressive roster of high-profile, health-focused clients.



Hooker

"causemedia welcomes the opportunity to work with one of the world's most socially responsible and forward-thinking pharmaceutical companies, Novo Nordisk," said Gittens. "Their leadership in research and development aimed at providing a product that can help communities of color battle diabetes is a synergistic match for us."

In addition to the stated mission of changing diabetes, Gittens found Novo Nordisk's approaches to measuring success and working with diverse communities compelling. Hooker, who understands the importance of Novo Nordisk's products and business strategy to diverse communities, was quick to mention the strategy to Gittens when the two first met.

"Novo Nordisk is committed to a triple bottom line, which means we focus on social responsibility, environmental soundness and economic viability," explained Hooker. "We believe in partnering with others to achieve healthier communities, and our Diverse Supplier Initiative is a resource that will better enable Novo Nordisk to build sustainable relationships with minority- and women-owned businesses, as well as businesses tracked by the federal government." Hooker added that the executive team at Novo Nordisk understands the importance of business diversity to clients as well as to people that use its products. "We want to be seen as a true partner by many communities," said Hooker.

To start the DSI brand-building process, causemedia will develop a series of messages that not only promote rapid integration of the program throughout Novo Nordisk, but also support the company's outreach to diverse suppliers. "We intend to begin promoting DSI to minority-owned businesses in June," said Hooker. "We are glad causemedia will enable us to keep to our aggressive schedule."