



**AT THE HELM**

Clockwise: Tatiana Lyons, SVP; Marci Piasecki, CEO; and Marcia Goddard, EVP

**PERFORMANCE**

Double-digit growth for seventh year in a row

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Added 15 brands from Stiefel Labs (newly acquired from GSK) and diabetes franchise from Boehringer Ingelheim

Launched epilepsy drug Vimpat from UCB with professional campaign

Expanded to 169 employees, with its strategic and scientific division doubling

**CHALLENGE**

Retaining talent

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 173

# Torre Lazur McCann

Fast-acting agency pounces on work from GSK, Novartis and Jazz



To succeed in business these days, according to Torre Lazur McCann (TLM) CEO Marci Piasecki, you need to move fast. Hearing Piasecki recount the year's highlights—which include organic growth from GlaxoSmithKline and new work from Novartis and Jazz Pharmaceuticals—it's obvious why alacrity ranks right up there with innovation and new media savvy for the agency.

"We seem to be on a tight timeline with all of our clients," says Piasecki, who in December became one of four main executives in McCann Healthcare Worldwide's "Office of the CEO" arrangement (she oversees Torre Lazur Healthcare Group, encompassing TLM and echo Torre Lazur). They come to TLM to help keep pace.

"Brand managers are being confronted with a lot of options from lots of vendors," she says. "Trying to navigate through that is tough."

All told, Piasecki says, "we probably increased [the number of accounts] by about 5% over last year." That translates to about \$30 million-40 million in additional revenue over 2008 and the seventh year in a row of double-digit growth.

One example of how the agency's agility came this year, when GSK pitched out its global dermatological portfolio in February, less than a week after acquiring

much of it in a \$3.6-billion takeover of Stiefel Labs. "It was a nice annuity win," says Piasecki of the Stiefel pickup, which has netted 15 brands and counting.

New client Boehringer Ingelheim entrusted TLM with its fledgling diabetes franchise last spring, including lead product linagliptin—which has since completed Phase III trials—as well as four others in earlier stages of development.

And for Jazz Pharmaceuticals, the agency was assigned fibromyalgia candidate JZP6. Rounding out last year's wins, Novartis added nephrology agent SBR759 to go along with another nephrology compound, RAD, assigned in 2008.

In between pitches, TLM also launched epilepsy drug Vimpat from UCB, a purely professional campaign that broke last year and was roundly praised by the client. Vimpat was positioned as the go-to add-on "at the first sign of failure" for patients with partial onset seizures, and TLM's campaign leveraged a surround-sound approach across various channels.

Working in a hyper-velocity environment raises one problem: finding top talent in the timeframe clients expect. "With a bolus shot of business, finding talent right now—not replacement but add-on—is challenging...it means we have growth," Piasecki says. Has the recession helped? "I was hoping that it would increase the talent pool, but in fact we're still having a tough time," she reports. "There are a lot of people out there, but we're having a tough time finding great talent."

Still, the agency managed to expand this past year to 169 employees. TLM's strategic and scientific business



Above: Journal ads for GSK's Entereg (left) and Novartis' Fluvad (right); Top: From a corporate ad for TLM

unit—which includes Strategic Planning, Scientific Integration and Business Intelligence—has doubled in size to include more than 20 people. "Where we see our business growing is from a strategic standpoint," Piasecki notes. "Therefore, a lot of hiring we are doing is in the strategic business unit and in the Active Ingredient [interactive] division, because when clients are doing tactical work, a lot of it lately is online."

Like the agency's clients, TLM is also running a bit lean. That can mean double and triple time for associates until management brings on reinforcements. Piasecki is just grateful to be in this position. "We all understand," she says. "It's a tough time to be feeling sorry for yourself." — Marc Iskowitz

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—Marci Piasecki