



AT THE HELM

Partners Rico Viray and Susan Miller Viray; and managing partner Jennifer Matthews (seated)

PERFORMANCE

Revenue up 24% in 2010 to \$34 million

HIGHLIGHTS

Landed eight new accounts, including BMS/Pfizer's Eliquis

Grew organically with Baxter, Boehringer Ingelheim/Pfizer, UCB and Medicis

Headcount up from 125 to 165, with Jennifer Matthews coming on board as managing partner

CHALLENGE

Expensive pitches

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 171

The CementBloc

Solid growth and a 67% pitch-win ratio helped regain 2008 numbers



After a tough year in 2009, The CementBloc partner Susan Miller Viray projected last year that revenue was on track to match or come close to the 2008 number (\$36.2 million). The agency hit that projection, ending 2010 up 24% to about \$34 million.

"It was a fantastic year that created a lot of positive momentum," Viray says. "We're starting some really interesting initiatives and pushing the envelope on creating new ways to communicate."

ShareTheLittleThings.com, which launched for breast cancer awareness month last October for Abraxis/Celgene, is a great example. Viray believes it's the first pharma social media platform that includes real-time user-generated content. "We're going into new areas and using new media, and it's challenging because it's still a regulatory grey area," she says. "What technology will allow is more than regulatory people will allow. We're still trying to ensure we're getting the most out of the new avenues."

Enjoying a 67% pitch-win rate, the agency landed eight new accounts including many from big pharma. One of the biggest came after besting five or six other agencies to land global and US AOR responsibility for Bristol-Myers Squibb/Pfizer's Eliquis (novel oral antico-

agulant). Additional new wins included work from Genzyme, Depomed, and Champions Biotechnology.

Relationships deepened with a number of big clients, including Baxter, Boehringer Ingelheim/Pfizer, UCB, Abraxis/Celgene and Medicis. Novartis awarded a major CRM initiative for Afinitor (oncology). The agency also launched Novartis' Gilenya, an oral MS treatment, in the US. It'll go global this year.

The agency won AOR status for dapagliflozin from Bristol-Myers Squibb and AstraZeneca in Q1 2011. It's a new class of diabetes treatment that Viray says has blockbuster potential. Two brands were resigned—Spiriva, the asthma treatment co-marketed by Pfizer and Boehringer Ingelheim, and Merz's Xeomin.

Reintegration of the four agencies that had been separated out in 2008 was complete by last spring. Jennifer Matthews, who was named managing partner in 2010, is heading operations.

Viray says focus is now on "convergent branding," meaning all stakeholders' points of view are considered from the very beginning. "Each stakeholder has such a significant voice that built-on strategy doesn't work anymore," she adds.

Viray sees a trend toward strengthening global branding, and many clients are pushing into emerging markets. Indigenus, the global network The CementBloc helped found in 2004, has grown to include 13 partners in India, Japan, Latin America, and Europe. A network-wide pitch for a major pharma company is upcoming. Viray calls it "a big step in getting the network very competitive with multinationals."



Above and top: An unbranded disease state awareness ad for vaccinations from Novartis Vaccines

"It feels like the industry is almost reinventing itself. Everything needs to be rethought"

—Susan Miller Viray

Viray notes pitches are getting "much, much more expensive and onerous." She believes the trend force some agencies to turn down opportunities.

Headcount ending 2010 was up from 125 to 148. It's now about 165. Viray expects to hire about 15 more.

"Executional excellence" is the mandate for the rest of 2011. "The dynamic nature of our industry now is unlike anything I've seen in past 15 years," Viray says. "Everything is changing so rapidly. It feels like the industry is almost reinventing itself. What worked five years ago no longer works. Everything needs to be rethought. Nothing can be taken for granted. That's what makes it fun." —Tanya Lewis