



AT THE HELM

Clockwise from top left: Managing partners Sonja Foster-Storch, Gerry McLaughlin, Jill Beene, Ashley Schofield

PERFORMANCE

Revenues up 15%

HIGHLIGHTS

Benefited from Omnicom's big win in Merck's consolidation

Won new business for a device in the urology/gynecology area

Brought back veteran CDM hand Sonja Foster-Storch

CHALLENGES

Recovering from the loss of J&J business

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 181

CDM Princeton

Relationships with longstanding clients are the basis for a rebound

CDM's New Jersey outpost, located in the heart of the Garden State's Medicine Country, prides itself on stability, camaraderie and the close bonds it has with its clients.

The 13-year-old shop enjoyed a solid 2011 as work from Merck and other clients helped the shop to complete its recovery from a jarring consolidation loss.

J&J was the agency's biggest client when, in 2009, CDM parent Omnicom lost out in a consolidation. Last year, however, Omnicom was one of the winners in Merck's consolidation, and directed a lot of that business to CDM Princeton, situated a half-hour's drive from Merck's Whitehouse Station headquarters. CDM Princeton ended 2011 with revenues up around 15%. Not too shabby—especially after a 17% revenue gain in 2010.

The shop has seen one big win in 2012—a device in the urology/gynecology area—and no losses.

Headcount at the firm came down a bit—to around 100 from last year's 110—as the shop leaned on CDM's new shared services unit, but the firm did hire some digital strategists, in addition to bringing on an old CDM hand, Sonja "Sunny" Foster-Storch, as managing partner, director of client services. Foster-Storch left Cline, Davis & Mann a decade ago to found a medical education company, Clinical Connection, and came back at the invitation of CDM Group president Carol DiSanto. It's a familiar world to Foster-Storch, who worked on the launch of Lipitor with her current fellow CDM Princeton managing partners Gerry McLaughlin and Ashley Schofield in the late '90s, just before they left the Big Apple to found the New Jersey satellite.

"It feels very much the culture that I left in the late '90s," says Foster-Storch. "It's familial, it's very collaborative. I feel that culture is what sets us apart. Down here in Princeton, we have this corridor, this

Mecca of pharmaceutical and device companies, and many of the people here have been with us for many, many years and have remained. We have a number of clients with whom we've worked for years and have maintained their loyalty to us because we take this very, very personally. It's a badge of honor to have clients who have worked with us for so many years and it's not just about loyalty, it's about strategy and being smart with their money."

The shop is headed up by four managing partners—McLaughlin, Schofield, Foster-Storch and director of strategic services Jill Beene—and this year, Craig Romanok, who has been with the firm almost from the start, was named associate partner, managing director. "Craig's been with us almost from the outset here in Princeton, and he's just so valued for his strategy and the innovative way he thinks," says Foster-Storch.

Major CDM Princeton clients include such heavy hitters as Merck, Novo Nordisk, Gilead, Baxter and

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MSD

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One of the many Merck brands serviced by CDM Princeton, the contraceptive Implanon NXT

Shire. Around 85% of the firm's work is aimed at healthcare professionals, the remainder patients and consumers, and more than half of it is digital.

"We brought in two digital strategists," says Foster-Storch, adding that "We're not doing digital for the sake of digital. We pride ourselves as brand stewards, regardless of who we're working with. It's brand first. That may mean print, online, a combination. It may mean partnering with our CDM sister agencies," including managed markets arm Entrée Health or CRM specialist CDMiConnect. "It's about doing what's best for the brand." —Matthew Arnold

"It's a badge of honor to have clients who have worked with us for so many years"

—Sonja Foster-Storch