



AT THE HELM

From left: Marcia Goddard (EVP, creative director), Marci Piasecki (CEO), Tatiana Lyons (SVP, director of client services)

PERFORMANCE

Flat performance last year, mostly due to 2010 problems

HIGHLIGHTS

Landed BI's investigational hepatitis C virus franchise

Early phase account wins promise to extend gains through 2012

CHALLENGES

Finding creative ways to work around client cutbacks

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“Pharma is still looking for ways to cut costs and we want to help”

—Marci Piasecki

McCann Torre Lazur

After a big comeback year in 2011, agency gets a branding change



Modified branding designed to emphasize affiliation with the parent network has taken root across five of the six US healthcare agencies of Interpublic Group's McCann Health (formerly McCann Healthcare Worldwide). The three Torre Lazur shops now sport new names: McCann Torre Lazur, McCann Echo Torre Lazur, and McCann TL Managed Markets (the RCW shops rebranded, too; see respective profiles.)

Marci Piasecki, who oversees the McCann Torre Lazur Group, says this is in keeping with the ad industry trend toward branding consistency. Plus, “It’s easier for our clients to understand what we’re part of.” It may be an auspicious time to clarify that connection. “Ten years ago, I don’t know if there was as much of an appreciation in the professional realm for how we communicate with consumers per se,” she says. “Today, more and more of our clients are very interested in McCann Health—the principals and practices of consumer marketing—because I think they’re starting to view healthcare professionals more and more like we’ve always viewed consumers, as many of them are getting and sending communication through mobile.”

Piasecki, who is also CEO of McCann Torre Lazur, characterizes the agency’s 2011 performance as flat, largely owing to a troublesome 2010, which saw FDA

complete response letters on two roster brands and forfeiture of diabetes business from Boehringer Ingelheim. To Piasecki’s delight, her agency won back the professional brief for BI’s Tradjenta and Jentaducto without a pitch six months later.

Her crew also landed BI’s investigational hepatitis C virus franchise. The agency went on to win Grifols’ eight-brand plasma franchise, three brands from Shionogi’s pediatric portfolio, and organic work from GlaxoSmithKline’s Stiefel dermatology unit, UCB’s epilepsy drug Vimpat (global), and Actelion Pharmaceuticals (global)—all professional, across all media. The only loss: ex-US work for GSK GI recovery brand Entereg. Also, Valeant stopped promoting Zovirax.

Since a lot of the account wins were early phase, much of the work has been realized in 2012. “And because clients are awarding business so early on in the lifecycle, this gives us an opportunity to leverage Quotient,” says Piasecki, referring to the new name for the agency’s strategic planning and medical insight unit. The group—headed by SVP strategic planning Hilary Genteil and Mark Wellmann, SVP scientific integration—is embedded into every AOR account at varying degrees, along with digital expertise, and Piasecki cites more pre-launch work, from market shaping to positioning to developing a lexicon for brands.

She says clients’ sales-force cutbacks have diminished the demand for traditional “boilerplate” marketing collateral. “Everything is tailored to our client’s needs and, honestly, their appetite for risk and where they are on the spectrum of new media.”



Work for the head-lice treatment Ulesfia (above left) and the Aptalis Live2Thrive program (above)

Headcount rose to 165, from 153 at the same time last year, and the agency is creating new positions. “We’re actually implementing a talent audit across all of our agencies,” Piasecki says, to put people in positions that suit their talent and the needs of clients, and all toward a new infrastructure.

“That’s the nut that has yet to crack, the ultimate infrastructure that promotes efficiency,” she says. “And clients are really, really hungry for it, for themselves and for us, because if you get it right costs go down. Pharma is still looking for ways to cut costs and we want to help, because if we are part of the solution, we’ll end up better on the other end.”

—Marc Iskowitz