



**AT THE HELM**

Michael McLinden,  
partner

**PERFORMANCE**

2011 revenue up 20%  
over 2010

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Significant new work  
from UCB, including a  
global AOR assignment

Making strong inroads  
into the mobile and  
digital spaces

Focus on market-  
research and strategy  
provides firm with more  
flexibility

**CHALLENGES**

Finding the talent to  
help the agency move  
forward

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

# McK Healthcare

Restructuring helps this Boston firm  
find some new revenue streams

**M**ck Healthcare had a few difficult losses in 2009 due to projects losing their funding or failing in Phase III, making 2010 a restructuring year for the firm. The agency moved its offices from Federal to State Street in Boston and long-time partner Breda Kenyon announced her retirement.

Partner Michael McLinden seized this opportunity to change the agency's direction. "My partner Breda retired, which was a huge issue for us, but it also gave us an opportunity to shuffle the decks and rethink how we were servicing our clients." McK hired Rich Angelini as SVP, Creative Director and also brought on Terry Gladman, as SVP, Director of Client Services.

This restructuring proved fruitful in the coming year. In 2011, the agency received work from UCB for Neupro, a treatment indicated for Parkinson's disease and Restless Leg Syndrome. Following this win, McK was invited to competitively pitch for a global AOR assignment, also from UCB, where they again pulled out a win. Year over year, McK's revenue grew by 20% for 2011 from 2010.

For McLinden and the rest of the agency, the question became: "How do you continue to create value in an industry where forces are aligned to make sure that doesn't happen? Managed care and healthcare reform is there to take profit out of branded products. We needed to deliver novel ways of engaging the marketplace. We don't have deep products to throw money at problems anymore."

McK's focus on market research and strategy allowed them some ease moving into 2012, especially in an industry where money is being found more and more in the margins; namely, they've had success in nutraceuticals, reformulations and more mature prod-

ucts. "The pickings have gotten slimmer," McLinden notes, "It's much more competitive to get the traditional product launch and brand development business. It has changed our landscape and in many cases it has been helpful, due to our comfort and experience with lifecycle planning. We have some hard-won experience to share in that space."

With things increasingly moving to mobile and digital, McK, too, has found a wealth of work in this space, although for McLinden, this is hardly a surprise. "I tell people here they're not allowed to say the word digital. Because if we say digital than we have to say paper. Digital is the water we're swimming in. There aren't any non-digital and digital answers any longer. We need to be able to consistently provide the best solutions, so if that's on an Android device or a messaging kiosk in an elevator, we need to be versed in it."

Now, with business growing, McK inherits a new problem: finding the right talent and accommodating new staff. "You could say that we are in the talent business," McLinden quips. "If we have good talent, clients

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McK worked on this piece about metastatic melanoma for Prometheus Therapeutics & Diagnostics

follow. If you don't, they disappear. Talent is our first problem and first challenge in this business. We have a full-time talent person, Melissa Wojcik, our chief operations officer, to spearhead these efforts. We want to make sure we have the right people in the building and once they're here, that they have the right job and tools, so they invest in staying here."

As for the coming months, McLinden is optimistic and sees steady growth. "No one is giving out easy money these days," he says, "but I think we have some really great tools, and a great promise we can put in front of clients." —Kevin McCaffrey

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—Michael McLinden