



AT THE HELM

Nick Calandrillo
(chief creative officer),
Dwayne Hann
(president)

PERFORMANCE

Revenue down 22%
last year

HIGHLIGHTS

Won new accounts
from Becton, Dickinson
and Co. and Akrimax
Therapeutics

Developed the Pro-Portal,
where physicians can
get samples and
educational materials

CHALLENGES

Making sure that potential
clients are aware
of the agency's digital
expertise.

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

**"2011 wasn't
the year
we thought
it was going
to be"**

—Dwayne Hann

Metaphor

Negotiating a rough year's pitfalls to
build a basis for future success

Metaphor's raft of new clients and its brand-new offices had president Dwayne Hann going into 2011 expecting it to be a big year for his Parsippany, NJ-based specialty pharma agency. But by May of last year disaster had struck. Graceway Pharmaceuticals, one of the agency's largest and steadiest clients, was spiraling toward a bankruptcy filing after losing exclusivity for Aldara, its blockbuster genital warts treatment and main source of sales. By the time that Medicis ended up picking up Graceway's pieces in an auction, the business for Metaphor dried up.

When the smoke from that situation finally cleared, Metaphor ended up down about 22% in revenue and had to lay off about seven people, leaving the agency with a workforce of 15.

"That was a big blow to us as a company," said Hann.

But things would have been considerably worse if Metaphor hadn't had some success on the new business front in 2010, winning a new account from Becton, Dickinson and Co. for a diagnostic product designed for early detection of Flu A and B. That product, the BD Veritor System, was launched at the end of 2011. To promote it, Metaphor pulled off a comprehensive campaign that included such elements as a web site, paid search, interactive promotional materials, sales force training, and, in a move that was unusual for BD, journal advertising.

"It was a big investment on their part," Hann said, adding that the work will continue this year with line extensions for the pediatric and clinical labs segments.

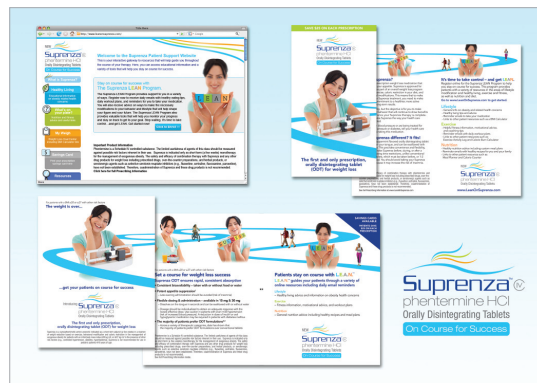
In 2011, Metaphor also secured two accounts that build on its relationship with Akrimax Therapeutics:

Suprenza, which is indicated for weight loss, and a pain reliever called Primlev.

About 50% of the work Metaphor does is now digital. According to Hann, digital is "the nature of what all clients are looking at." He adds that the company has made an effort to emphasize that digital aspect of their expertise. "We've worked hard to position ourselves with clients and future clients as someone with a strong digital capability."

Digital is especially vital in professional marketing, an area which makes up about 90% of Metaphor's work. For Akrimax, Metaphor developed something that it calls a ProPortal, where physicians can get samples, educational materials and view webcasts and webinars.

"Any specialty-focused company is looking for ways to reach physicians they don't call on, that they can't reach," Hann said. "Either they don't have enough reps or they want to focus on one specialty, yet there are more specialties that might use their product." He says that Metaphor looks for ways to help remedy that situation: "We try to develop tools and campaigns that reach the non-called-on physician population."



Metaphor's work for Akrimax Therapeutics on Suprenza included print and online components

Hann also believes there's a strong future for diagnostic products and sees those as a part of the agency's client mix going forward. "There's a demonstrable increase in point-of-care diagnostic testing in all areas," he said. "It's an interesting area and one that's growing dramatically. And it's projected to grow more."

For all the discouragement of last year, Hann is optimistic about the future, pointing to the firm's specialty-focused positioning and experienced staff capable of building long, fruitful relationships. Case in point: Akrimax, whose co-founder and chairman also co-founded Reliant Pharmaceuticals, a Metaphor client that was snapped up by GlaxoSmithKline five years ago.

"2011 wasn't the year we thought it was going to be," said Hann, who's expecting to add two or three people in the fourth quarter. "On the other hand, we've hustled and stepped up our efforts and we've made good contacts. I'd expect at end of 2012 we will be close to where we were at the beginning of last year." —Matthew Creamer