



AT THE HELM

From left: Kerry Hilton (CEO), Nancy Beesley (Partner, CMO), Lloyd Sheep (Partner, COO)

PERFORMANCE

Revenue increased 17% to \$9 million

HIGHLIGHTS

Apple named an app that HCB created for Alcon as "best-in-class"

Won AOR status for Forfivo and work for ALK Abello, Pacific Edge and PLx Pharmaceuticals

Headcount increased from 43 to 59

CHALLENGES

Cultivating new device business

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 187

"Demand for mobile just gets bigger every month"

—Kerry Hilton

HCB Health

Digital-savvy Austin firm positions itself as a premier device agency

HCB Health has been strengthening its device expertise as well as realigning around the capability. That strategy is paying off nicely. The Austin-based agency has launched 14 devices for clients Alcon and Covidien in the last 15 months, and revenue climbed 17% to \$9 million in 2012.

"We've established ourselves as a premier device agency," says partner and chief marketing officer Nancy Beesley. "Every department of the agency has deep experience. We now have more than 25 device experts on staff."

Partner and CEO Kerry Hilton notes creative is becoming more digital and client demand for digital strategies and tactics is up, as is demand for precise measurement and ROI on all marketing investments.

"The demand for mobile just gets bigger every month," he adds. "We'll continue to develop even more mobile solutions for clients."

Apps are important sales tools for device companies, and Beesley says HCB is creating "unprecedented" apps that give clients' customers the experience of actually using a device.

Early last year the agency was named AOR for Alcon Surgical in the US. An app created for Alcon's WaveLight EX500 Excimer Laser is featured on Apple.com as a best-in-class example showcasing the marketing capability of Apple's iBooks Author program.

Beesley says the nod from Apple is "incredibly big" for HCB, giving its teams "recognition beyond just awards, and shows these kinds of original ideas coming out of Austin are having a worldwide impact."

Other 2012 wins included professional AOR designation for the launch of depression treatment Forfivo (won from existing client Edgemont); professional facing PR work on ALK Abello's Pre-Pen (skin test to

diagnose penicillin allergy); and a digital assignment for the Thyroid Head & Neck Cancer Foundation.

The agency landed branding assignments for Pacific Edge's CX Bladder (urine test for bladder cancer detection); for a new type of aspirin from PLx Pharmaceuticals; and for comparative analytics provider RemitDATA. HCB's relationship with PLx Pharmaceuticals expanded to include prelaunch consumer work.

A California Pacific Medical Center account was lost after the center was acquired.

HCB has outgrown the space it moved into two years ago, as staff increased from 43 in 2011 to 59 now, and had to undergo some construction earlier this year to create more space. Beesley thinks the agency will need to take over even more office space this year.

A full-time recruiter, hired last year, has formalized the recruitment process. Five positions are open across account, creative, digital and administration teams.

HCB Health produced this advertisement to promote the Sensing Systems of Covidien

Account directors Kim Carpenter and Amy Dowell were promoted to VPs, overseeing four new account directors. Steve Miller joined as executive creative director, overseeing creative and digital, and Kathy Field joined as group creative director. These shifts have allowed Beesley and Hilton the freedom to concentrate on cultivating new device business.

Most of this summer will be spent preparing to launch three new devices and a technology showcase for Alcon this fall in Amsterdam. Beesley is projecting 2013 revenue will be up by 20% or more.

"Kerry and I will get out on the road and talk to more device companies," she adds. "We're expecting to add one or two big fish to our roster this year."

—Tanya Lewis