



AT THE HELM

Jeff Sweeney, president; Maureen Regan, president, RCW Group

PERFORMANCE

For 2012, “double-digit” growth and no reported losses

HIGHLIGHTS

New business from Alcon Labs, as well as significant organic growth from such clients as Amgen, Prometheus Labs and Allergan

Doing an increased amount of DTP work

CHALLENGES

Finding new employees who have oncology experience

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

McCann RCW Healthcare

Bicoastal agency is able to give clients “the best of both worlds”

McCann RCW Healthcare would rate as one of the largest ad agencies in California by headcount if all its employees were on the west coast. But this IPG agency’s 50 staff are split bi-coastally. In the La Jolla office (San Diego, CA) are the senior account and strategy people, while the creative factory resides in New York.

Says Jeff Sweeney, president, “We’re trying to give clients the best of both worlds—top-level service and support but also the creative talent they need.”

Signs are it’s worked well. Last year was a big one for the agency in terms of expanding organically. Other than winning new business from Alcon Labs, every piece of work that entered came from existing clients like Amgen, Prometheus Labs and Allergan.

“We had double-digit growth,” boasts Sweeney, and there were no reported losses. His crew expanded with Allergan weight-loss device Lap-Band and Prometheus IBS drug Lotronex. For both, the agency was professional AOR and added the consumer business.

Asked, half-jokingly, whether the agency is turning into a consumer shop, Sweeney replies, “It’s a tough time. We’ll get business wherever we can take it.” He continues, “We’re increasingly noticing more of our clients are looking [for] efficiencies, a single partner that can deliver a solution.”

Following the same pattern, his crew has been doing DTP work for Kowa, where it started with a professional assignment. “We are involved in more facets of what is not traditional for us in professional agencies,” adds Maureen Regan, president of McCann RCW Group. “We have that skill set.”

Amgen handed the agency the global brief for blina-

tumomab (AMG 103), expanding beyond project work on the experimental leukemia antibody. New client Alcon awarded ICAPS eye vitamins and Systane lubricant eye drops to the roster.

Sweeney cites the mix of organic and inorganic growth as his biggest achievement—“Any time that you can get business from an existing client, you’re thrilled because it’s a testament to the great work you’ve done with them.”

Talent stays a challenge, specifically finding people with oncology experience. It’s one reason why McCann RCW Healthcare’s bicoastal business model has been a plus. “It’s easier for us to find talent on the east coast, because there’s just more of it there,” Sweeney explains.

The other hurdle involves ensuring the agency takes advantage of new technology and services clients’ multifaceted needs. “Obviously, they need us to help them build great brands,” says Sweeney, “but we can go a step further and build their businesses.” That means helping with challenges like raising brand awareness, compliance and patient identification—and offering opportunities to take advantage of non-personal promotion.

McCann RCW Healthcare’s mix of professional and consumer clients includes Allergan’s Lap-Band

“From a creative standpoint, you don’t solve someone’s problem with a great picture or headline anymore,” says Brendan Ward, EVP/ executive director at sister shop McCann Regan Campbell Ward. “To engage customers, you have to work harder.”

For 2013, business is “trending in the right direction,” Sweeney says. “It would be my hope that we could replicate the success we had in 2012.” Internal plans include more staff education, which promotes retention. “That’s a huge effort on our part,” says Sweeney. “At the end of the day, it’s helped us.” — Marc Iskowitz

“You don’t solve someone’s problem with a great picture or headline anymore”

—Brendan Ward