



AT THE HELM

Partner and COO Ken Begasse, Jr. and partner and CCO Michael Sanzen

PERFORMANCE

Revenue was up 10%

HIGHLIGHTS

Scored an AOR win for Medtronic's coronary-device franchise

New work from Theravance, Guerbet, LEO Pharma and Onset Dermatologics

Headcount grew to 110

CHALLENGES

Dealing with client anxiety over uncertainty in the financial markets and healthcare reform

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

“The job is about being a partner to creative and account groups”

—Ken Begasse, Jr.

Concentric Health Experience

A diversified approach helps clients deal with a challenging environment



Concentric partner and COO Ken Begasse, Jr. says tentativeness from clients big and small resulted in fragmentation of spend and a stop-and-go dynamic last year. Consequently, revenue growth slowed from 20% in 2011 to 10% last year.

“Uncertainty in the financial markets and failing economies in Europe had a global impact,” he explains. “There was also uncertainty regarding healthcare reform and the election. The result was a challenging environment for our clients.”

Begasse reports “furious” first-quarter growth this year, with an AOR win for Medtronic’s coronary-device franchise. He expects 20% growth ending this year.

Eighty percent of clients are using Concentric Health Intelligence, the agency’s research service, which helps inform decisions and validate performance.

Begasse sees a definite shift in approach to promotion and budget allocation among mid-size pharma company clients, noting they’re adjusting spend throughout the year.

“They’re experimenting,” he says. “They don’t necessarily trust the old channels anymore, and they don’t know if they trust some of the new channels either. If a recommended tactic shows positive data, they invest

more and round out the overall brand experience.”

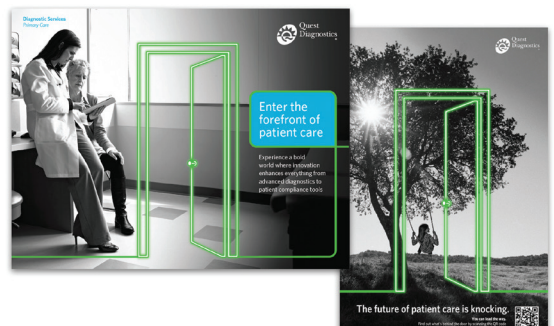
Concentric and its MDC Partners sibling Doner led formation of the MDC Health Co-op last year. Through the Co-op, Concentric is partnering with the healthcare practices within seven MDC agencies.

“We’re activating specialists for clients’ specific needs, and it’s highly scalable,” Begasse says. “It’s not about integrating agencies—it’s about integrating the right people from different agencies into one team.”

The last 12 months brought 10 new wins, including four AOR assignments. Digital work has increased from about 45% in 2011 to 55%. Work for four Novartis brands that includes moderated dialog on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube is a great example of the agency’s digital acumen. The new AOR assignments are for Theravance’s Vibativ (CSSI infections); Guerbet’s MRI contrasting agent Dotarem; LEO Pharma’s Taclonex Body (psoriasis); and Onset Dermatologics’ Locoid (atopic dermatitis).

“The type of work we’ve won is exciting,” Begasse says. “It’s less traditional and getting more at the heart of pulling together communications strategy. And we’re doing innovative work in social. Kudos to Novartis, which took a major leap and really helped move pharma forward into the social space.”

Worldwide headcount was up about 10 to 110 (82 in the US). Continued focus on “elevating the health experience” led to increased capabilities in scientific, behavioral, digital, customer strategy and analytics. Jennifer Fischette, hired as EVP, director of client and strategic planning services in 2012, was promoted to managing partner this year. Antoinette Bobbitt and



Enbrel (above left) and Quest Diagnostics (above) benefited from the Concentric touch

Lori O’Neill joined as EVPs heading strategy and payer strategies, respectively. Andrew Bast was hired as SVP, communication strategies, and Jeff Hughes was promoted to EVP, director of medical insights.

Upwards of 10 positions are open across all levels, and Begasse says finding great project managers is key to growth.

“The project management role is changing, and we’ve really elevated it,” he explains. “The job is about being a partner to creative and account groups to help them achieve the strategic vision. When you’re pushing limitations of new channels you must have people who understand that and can translate it into talent, resource management and budget.” —Tanya Lewis