



AT THE HELM

Jessica Boden, president; Judy Kessel, founder, board chair; Jerrold Gershone, CEO

PERFORMANCE

After 30% growth in 2012, agency had a 15% spike last year

HIGHLIGHTS

Pro-bono Redeye Rebrand initiative was featured in the *New York Times*

Added health, IT, disease prevention and public health to its portfolio of medical-device and hospital clients

CHALLENGES

Shifting its focus from healthcare organizations to payers

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 183

StoneArch

After 30 years in the business, still finding new avenues to explore



StoneArch's 30th anniversary in business finds it with more mojo than ever before. The Minneapolis agency cracked \$10 million in revenue for the first time in 2013 with 15% growth; brought on 16 new clients; and broadened its reach across the full spectrum of healthcare, adding health IT, disease prevention, and public health to its portfolio of medical-device and hospital clients. In March of this year, StoneArch's Redeye Rebrand pro-bono initiative, offering a free marketing makeover to a local nonprofit, was featured in the *New York Times*; the following month, agency President Jessica Boden was named by the Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal as a "50 Women in Business" honoree. Boden's agency may be closer to Moose Jaw than it is to Manhattan, but you wouldn't know it from the way she talks about the future of her business.

"Healthcare is truly on the cusp of harnessing the full power of modern marketing," she says. "Clients' campaigns have the potential to be much more data-driven and targeted. We are helping our clients navigate, select and implement newer channels. From physician-and

patient-centric CRM platforms to marketing automation, content marketing and real-time analytics, now more than ever our healthcare clients are approaching their marketing with a truly digital point of view."

Boden is finding that clients are placing less focus on building awareness and more on engaging with customers in a highly targeted way. "We are also seeing an even greater need to focus on reaching buyer groups rather than individual healthcare organizations," she says. "Additionally, targeting the economic buyer has never been more critical. To that extent, we are seeing a shift in clinical endpoints that focus on time and cost efficiencies, not just safety and efficacy endpoints."

With two straight years of unprecedented success in her back pocket—StoneArch also grew by 30% in 2012—the pressure is on Boden and her team to find new avenues for the agency to explore. One top priority is to gain more traction in the hospital and provider space by helping such companies maximize their marketing efforts to both physicians and healthcare consumers. Another is to focus on the basic principles that have worked in the past—driving business growth for clients through a creative and strategic product.

"For our clients, many of their products and services are becoming more commoditized, making it even harder to find valuable differentiation," Boden says. "Additionally, the person making the buying decision does not always truly understand the clinical value of emerging and changing technologies and the value to their organization and patients. In many cases, the challenge is in helping our clients understand that how they sell and what kind of user experience they can deliver are often just as important as what they sell."



A print piece for ProVation MD from Walters Kluwer (left); the website for EXOGEN (above)

To pull off that sort of user experience, the agency has been flexing its e-chops of late, developing digital publishing apps, a patient therapy tracking app, and sales-centered e-learning materials for clients. And not just for clients, either; in the "Physician, heal thyself" category, the agency's internal health initiative, STRETCH, can be found all over its Twitter and Vine accounts. As much as anything, STRETCH may reflect what Boden calls the most important achievement of 2013 for her agency. "We've realized that our passion for health had grown beyond professional expertise—health has become personal to us," she says. "We are now truly living our brand." —Joshua Slatko

"Healthcare is on the cusp of harnessing the power of modern marketing"

—Jessica Boden