



AT THE HELM
The CementBloc executive team

PERFORMANCE
Revenues rose 13% in 2013, reaching \$47 million

HIGHLIGHTS
Acquiring 36 mid-lifecycle Merck brands was one of the most significant wins in the agency's history

Won 69 creative awards

New relationships with BDSI, Vivamed, DePuy Synthes, Ranbaxy and Guerbet

CHALLENGES
Shrinking client budgets and overcrowded pitches

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

The CementBloc

Working effectively with clients results in wins—and awards



Creating the energy that drove The CementBloc's revenue up 13% last year, to \$47 million, was a list of 51 assignments. Among the new business was one of the most significant wins in the agency's history—36 mid-lifecycle Merck brands. Work includes global AOR and US AOR designations.

"The Merck win was significant not just because it represents a lot of brands but because it's a franchise level win against networks," says partner Susan Miller Viray. "It was a milestone."

Viray and managing partner Jennifer Matthews say last year's launch of BlocSky, described as a process of working more effectively with clients, helped win the Merck business. "It's not just a cost play," Matthews explains. "Clients are looking for both top- and bottom-line value. BlocSky addresses both by delivering quality ideas and service more efficiently. It's most effective for brands that have a firm strategic foundation." In other words, BlocSky is ideal for mid-lifecycle brands, and the partners hope it will help win more of these brands.

"The promise of BlocSky is not to have to pitch one brand at a time, but to hopefully walk away with significant multi-brand wins from very big players," Viray says. "Merck was previously closed to us because of network consolidation. BlocSky opened that door, and we're hoping it will open other doors. It's our anti-consolidation strategy."

Other new relationships began with BDSI, which awarded US AOR designation on Bunavail (opioid dependence), and with Vivamed, DePuy Synthes, Ranbaxy and Guerbet—all of which awarded project work. Multiple new AOR assignments came in from existing clients Novartis, AstraZeneca, BMS, GSK and Vertex.

Work on BTG's Varisolve was the only loss (due to management change).

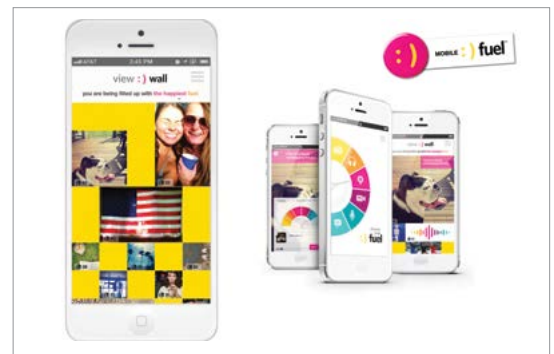
The Vertex win, a global AOR assignment (cystic fibrosis pipeline), was significant for both the agency and Indigenus, the global network of 17 independent agencies that CementBloc helped found. All Indigenus agencies will convene in New York this year to celebrate the network's 10th anniversary.

"Our oncology, managed markets and global business all continue to grow," Matthews notes. "Clients want a deeper-level relationship across digital and traditional, and across payer and professional. For some, we're handling all communications related to commercializing a product."

The CementBloc won 69 creative awards in 2013, which according to Matthews made it the most awarded agency by far.

Other highlights included launching a novel social wellness app inspired by the UN's World Happiness Report, and working on Vetvance, a platform that's helping client Zoetis engage emerging veterinarians.

Partner Kim Johnson left this year for the president role at Palio+Ignite. Viray and Matthews agree it's a great opportunity for Johnson, and they're thrilled for her. Viray says Johnson left a very strong team, so no accounts were jarred by her departure.



Work on the Afinitor website (left) and a mobile app that lets user gauge their happiness (above)

Among challenges and trends, Viray cites shrinking client budgets and overcrowded pitches.

"In maybe six pitches last year, we were up against five or six agencies," she says. "So we're investing to pitch with reduced odds to win. I don't think that's a fair challenge for agencies. And then you find out that the budget wasn't as well established or even approved in some cases."

Despite challenges, momentum continues this year with new business wins from existing clients, including Novartis and AstraZeneca, and from new clients, such as Boston Heart Diagnostics and ProCure Treatment Centers. — Tanya Lewis

"Clients are looking for both top- and bottom-line value"

—Jennifer Matthews