



AT THE HELM

Tom Collins and Steve Coldiron principals

PERFORMANCE

Increasing work has agency predicting staff growth from 15 to 20 this year

HIGHLIGHTS

New clients include Stryker (for neurovascular intervention products) and Edan Instruments

Agency's reputation for visual flair and detailed expertise have attracted device-and-diagnostics clients

CHALLENGES

Coming back from losses faced during the economic downturn

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

Jocoto

Solid knowledge of devices and diagnostics brings in business



Jocoto Advertising doesn't proclaim its brilliance from the pinnacle of the highest nearby mountain. Its two principals—Steve Coldiron and Tom Collins, creatives both—don't offer commentary-on-demand to marketing publications or at deep-thinky industry summits. Aside from submitting work to awards programs, Jocoto does little in the way of profile-building. When asked about this, however, Coldiron seems baffled. "You know, we just kind of do our work," he says, chuckling.

In the absence of Jocoto promoting itself, then, here's a quick primer. Since opening its doors a decade or so ago, Jocoto has earned a reputation among device and diagnostics companies for the visual flair of its work, the strategy that underlines it and the lack of pretense that accompanies it. Owing to what Coldiron calls "a pretty conservative approach to growth," Jocoto currently tops out at 15 people, though it hopes to jump that number to 20 within the next year.

Coldiron candidly admits that the company faced its share of struggles during the most recent economic downturn. While it never got to a point where Jocoto considered shutting up shop, the firm had to cut fees and accept lower margins. "It was hard and maybe even a little humbling, but without it there wouldn't have been as much work," Coldiron recalls. "Then

there are issues when you get back to where we are now. A potential client just called us—they'd called three years ago and we gave them a quote. We never worked together, but they asked for another one now. They were like, 'Wow, that's so much more.'"

Jocoto has thrived owing to its expertise in the challenging, oft-misunderstood space of devices and diagnostics. Those categories, Coldiron says, "used to mean machines and not much else." Now, however, advances in genetic medicine have transformed the space into something more diverse and exciting.

"Genetics-based diagnostics is increasingly becoming prognostics," Coldiron explains. "Thirteen years ago, you'd give blood and [the doctor would] stick it in a machine, and it would tell you your cholesterol. Now you do the same thing and you can learn specifically what will work with a particular type of cancer. That's the future of things: if you have a serious illness, before the doctor tells you what to do he'll run a specific test and tell you the likelihood of successful treatment. Then he'll tailor [treatment] to your specific strain of the disease, not just to the disease in general."

Asked whether the evolution of the device and diagnostics space prevents firms without depth of experience from competing for clients, Coldiron demurs. "Over time, the experience can be gained, but certainly that's one of our key competitive advantages. We can show examples. We can show that our work isn't just interesting and eye-catching, but that it's borne out of a strategic message development platform."

Clients who bought into Jocoto's approach during the past year include Stryker (for its neurovascular intervention suite of products) and Chinese company



From left: Jocoto's work for AngioScore, Stryker Neurovascular and Myriad Genetics

Edan Instruments (which manufactures devices in a range of therapeutic categories). The latter represents a best-case-scenario client for Jocoto going forward, given the agency's poor fit as, say, global AOR for a Medtronic-size concern.

"The nice thing is that Edan isn't a startup—they've been in business almost 20 years. They're looking to compete with Philips and Siemens and become a real global brand, and they want a whole new brand personality," Coldiron says, before adding with a laugh, "We're gonna ask them to sort of change everything."

—Larry Dobrow

"We can show that our work isn't just interesting and eye-catching"

—Steve Coldiron