



**AT THE HELM**

Mark Arnold, EVP, managing director; Kevin McHale, EVP, executive creative director

**PERFORMANCE**

Revenue was flat with 2012's, in the \$25-million to \$50-million range

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Won a pre-launch Novartis dermatology assignment

Executed launches for Zogenix's Zohydro ER and Orenitram from United Therapeutics

**CHALLENGES**

Losses from Pfizer due to agency consolidation and from Meda Pharmaceuticals

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

**"The more diversified we get, the stronger we are"**

—Mark Arnold

# Neon

Agency comes out swinging after Pfizer hit, and scores a comeback

Neon's EVP, managing director, Mark Arnold graciously ushers a reporter into the agency's offices for our annual performance check-up. With its cavernous conference rooms and state-of-the-art editing suites, the six-month-old Manhattan work space at 1400 Broadway shouts "solid performer."

Arnold confirms it. While he says 2013 revenue was flat with 2012's (within the \$25-million-to-\$50-million bracket), Neon diversified its roster, growing from five key clients to 10, and launched two products so far this year with two more on the way. "It's been a renaissance year for us," says Kevin McHale, EVP, executive creative director. "The launches, the new clients, have brought new opportunities, creatively and strategically."

With that outcome, you'd never guess that Neon lost a portfolio of 10 accounts last year (not all of them being promoted at the same time). The agency, spun off in 2009 from Draftfcb Healthcare (now FCB Health) to service J&J diabetes med Invokana, launched its premier brand in 2013 and two others—Pfizer's Eleyso for Gaucher and liquid ADHD drug Quillivant XR.

But with IPG on the losing end of Pfizer's holding company consolidation, the drugmaker plucked several brands from Neon's roster, both the two new ones and a slew of established products business.

That wasn't the only adversity. Meda Pharmaceuticals decided to take seasonal allergy drug Dymista to the current ex-US shop, through no fault of Neon's.

But Neon recovered, adding a Novartis dermatology assignment for which it debuted a pre-launch disease-state awareness and Patient Listening Project at this year's American Academy of Dermatology meeting.

One of its two launches was Zogenix's Zohydro ER extended-release hydrocodone, for which it worked

the HCP and consumer sides. The other was United Therapeutics for the HCP and consumer-digital business on oral, orphan PAH drug Orenitram—a win following Neon's work on the inhalable version, Tyvaso.

Also in the organic-growth column, Neon, which had been doing the professional work for Gilead hep. B drug Viread, pitched and landed DTC for the brand.

Among other wins, Sigma Tau hired the agency to do professional promotion and convention materials for leukemia drug Oncaspar, which is facing a new competitor. And Otsuka subsidiary Taiho Onc awarded the launch of colorectal cancer agent TAS-102, in addition to branding work for the fledgling company.

"Q3 and Q4 were big quarters—that's when we had an influx of new accounts and had to staff up," says McHale. Staff levels shrank post-Pfizer to about 105, then grew to between 118 and 124—around pre-consolidation levels. New additions included two from FCB Health—Cathryn Tune, PhD, an immunologist who joined as Neon's full-time medical director, and Trevor Fusaro, who's now strategic planning director.



**A hep. B awareness piece for Gilead (top) and an ad promoting Tyvaso from United Therapeutics**

Arnold is determined not to get too reliant on any one client again. Speaking of the agency's greatest achievement, he says, "The more diversified we get, the stronger we are."

The biggest challenge: execution and keeping up momentum. Management is gearing up for two more unnamed launches this year. It's also on the hunt for more work. No job is too small. "We make the littlest thing the best thing ever," McHale says. "If a client asks for A, [we ask] can we give them B, C and D."

—Marc Iskowitz