



AT THE HELM

Sonja Foster-Storch, president

PERFORMANCE

Revenues over \$30 million, up 11% from the prior year's

HIGHLIGHTS

Added 12 high-profile account wins

Revived relationship with Teva in advance of a 2016 painkiller launch

Expanded relationship with Eisai

CHALLENGES

Signing A-list talent

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

**McCANN
ECHO**

Distinguishing itself from its sister firms



Asked to discuss her first full calendar year at the helm of McCann Echo, president Sonja Foster-Storch's quick-hit response is, "How much time do we have?" It's not just posturing: The firm achieved any number of professional milestones during 2014. It shot revenues past \$30 million, representing an 11% jump over 2013's sum. Plus, in order to further distinguish itself from similarly named entities under the McCann Health umbrella, McCann Echo dropped "Torre Lazar" from its moniker.

The good times look likely to continue. Foster-Storch reports that the company should crack the 200-employee mark by year's end (it ended 2014 at 183, up from 179 at the end of 2013). She expects that McCann Echo's 2015 revenue will similarly surge, by around 21% over 2014.

This kind of growth comes with the slightest of downsides: McCann Echo has had to rejigger its space twice in two years to accommodate all the new staff. Still, in the wake of 12 high-profile account wins during 2014, nobody's complaining.

The new business included a revived relationship with Teva, for an abuse-deterrent painkiller that will launch in 2016. The win, which came McCann Echo's way in the wake of what Foster-Storch characterizes as a superstar pitch (she uses slightly saltier language to describe it, but you get the point), is obviously nice for the ledger.

Foster-Storch, however, believes that it's just as important from the perspectives of building and sustaining relationships. To wit, another piece of new work secured in 2014 was an account from Abbott Vascular—one that came about when a pitch for a completely different product had to be postponed.

McCann Echo also expanded its relationship with Eisai on the weight-loss drug Belviq. Having impressed the drugmaker with its DTC work, the agency was asked to take on the drug's professional component as well.

What distinguishes McCann Echo's work, according to Foster-Storch, is a tight focus on understanding what is not being understood by any or all audiences. "We're not just doing advertising and then moving along our way," she explains. "We are advertising, we are educating, we are providing you as a healthcare provider or nurse practitioner with tools that offer value. It's not just pushing stuff out and 'call me if you need me.'" She adds that this level of commitment is vital, because her team of creatives, patient educators, patient literacy experts and strategists have one ultimate goal: to improve health.

Still, with the company perpetually on the hunt for A-list talent, Foster-Storch says that passion and a sense of humor are traits that come in handy. She notes how much the work has changed during her 29 years in the business, quipping that there's no longer a need to "tell people [she's] in landscaping" when people ask what she does for a



Above left: McCann Echo took on rosacea with its ad for Soolantra (ivermectin). Above: Its multichannel "dashboard" approach for EMD Serono/Pfizer MS drug Rebif

living. Instead, she cites a relatively new openness among the public to believing that pharmaceutical companies want to help patients, rather than merely chase profits.

Foster-Storch says her first two years with McCann have been a whirlwind. While what lies ahead looks promising, not knowing for sure is a thrill all its own. "If you don't love roller coasters, you should not get married or go into advertising," she jokes.

—Deborah Weinstein

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