



AT THE HELM
Leo Tarkovsky, president

PERFORMANCE

A 35% spike in year-on-year revenue in 2014

HIGHLIGHTS

Head count rose from 40 to 70 full-timers

Twelve new brand assignments

Additions to the client roster include Valeant Pharmaceuticals, Reckitt Benckiser and the USPS

CHALLENGES

Lost one brand, Boehringer Ingelheim's diabetes drug Tradjenta, due to an agency consolidation

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

McCANN HUMANCARE NORTH AMERICA

Pushing the envelope to evolve wisely



Leo Tarkovsky, president, McCann HumanCare North America, is big on accountability. To that end he insists on commencing a conversation about his company's 2014 results by referring to a 2014 conversation about the firm's 2013 results.

"What did I tell you then? It was three things: that we had to diversify or die, bring in good talent or die, and grow or die," he says. "I'm being melodramatic, but we thought it was important to build an agency that would be very different from the agency we used to be."

By nearly every measure that matters and some that don't, the HumanCare team succeeded in that ambitious goal. Tarkovsky reports a 35% spike in year-on-year revenue in 2014 ("with strong profitability"), a near-doubling in head count (from 40 to 70 full-timers, supplemented by a gaggle of contractors and freelancers) and the addition of 12 new brand assignments against a single loss (Boehringer Ingelheim's diabetes drug Tradjenta, which disappeared amid agency consolidation that, Tarkovsky says, "was not a surprise to anybody here"). Additions to the client roster included Valeant Pharmaceuticals (for the CeraVe skin care line and Bausch + Lomb brands Biotrue and Soothe), Reckitt Benckiser (for Mucinex and supplements MegaRed and Airborne, among others) and, of course, pharma mainstays like the United States Postal Service.

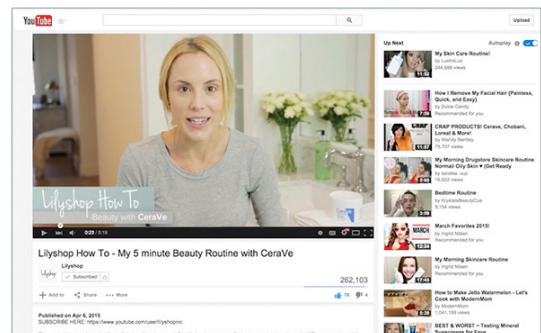
Wait—what? The Postal Service? Let Tarkovsky explain: "They started looking a few years ago to

create other revenue drivers and one of them is the Electronic Health Records Initiative. It's EMRs for consumers, not doctors. You've got the trusted name of the USPS working on a secure digital portal for health data."

Tarkovsky stresses that the project is "very much a work in progress," but its very existence on the HumanCare roster signifies just how successful the agency has been in reorienting itself to take advantage of opportunities within the burgeoning wellness category. "When I came to HumanCare, it was very much pharma oriented," he explains. "I love pharma and that will always be a major part of who we are. But we saw how health and wellness is becoming such a big part of society. We wanted to seize the moment."

To do so required HumanCare to "mix it up a bit" on the personnel front, Tarkovsky says. "We're secure enough in our own understanding of health-care as an industry, so we gambled a little bit and brought in people who aren't pharma traditional. It was like, 'Let's see what happens.'" He's referring to the hiring of a handful of creatives from Spike DDB, the multicultural-minded ad boutique headed by Spike Lee. "They might not have done healthcare or wellness before, but they've done a lot of cool things. Having those perspectives has really changed the way we think."

It has also opened the eyes of longtime HumanCare clients like Merck and Novartis, which responded with something akin to glee upon learning about the evolved personnel mix. The next challenge, then,



Above left: McCann HumanCare's ad for sublingual allergy tablet Ragwitek. Above: The Lilyshop How To, part of a social push for Valeant's CeraVe

is convincing these and other established organizations to push the envelope a bit in the digital and mobile spheres. Tarkovsky points to the awareness booster shot HumanCare administered on behalf of CeraVe as an example of what he envisions.

"We did it exclusively through social media—no print, no TV, nothing traditional," he says. "Pharma managers don't live in a bubble. They have iPhones. They get excited about technology, too. We want to help them get outside 'the usual' in pharma. It's a difficult conversation, but we're ready for it and we think they are as well."

—Larry Dobrow

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—LEO TARKOVSKY