



## AT THE HELM

Senior team (clockwise): Ken Begasse, Jr.; Ken Begasse, Sr.; Chris Runge; Michael Banner; Michael Sanzen and Adam Cohen

## PERFORMANCE

Ended 2009 with revenue "marginally" up to \$12.9 million

## HIGHLIGHTS

Wins include work for J&J, Pfizer, Oceana Therapeutics and Avanir

Acuvue campaign delivered 1700% ROI vs 2008

London office ended with 300% year-to-year growth

## CHALLENGE

Network consolidation

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 173

**"Last year was a challenging year, but we emerged from it a much stronger company"**

—Ken Begasse, Jr.

# Concentric

International growth, explosive ROI propelled shop into strong first quarter



Concentric Pharma Advertising partner and COO Ken Begasse Jr. reports some client uncertainty going into 2009, but revenue ended up marginally to \$12.9 million. Business picked up significantly last summer, and momentum has continued. Begasse says the two quarters were the strongest in the agency's history, and the second quarter this year is shaping up to be even bigger.

"Last year was a challenging year, certainly, but we emerged from it a much stronger company," Begasse says. "We've focused on being even more efficient...and we enhanced our ability to measure performance."

Concentric's London office celebrated its first anniversary last year. It saw astounding 300% year-to-year growth, fueled by big wins including Johnson & Johnson's skincare franchise; Pfizer's cardiovascular portfolio; and The Mentholatum Company's line of topical pain relievers. This year it landed Roche's MabThera business and work for The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry. "They knocked it out of the park," Begasse says. "There seems to be a real need for a high-science agency in Europe."

New business in the US included three additional brands from Pfizer Nutrition (formerly Wyeth Nutrition); two launch assignments from Oceana Therapeutics—Deflux (pediatric urology community) and Solesta (fecal incontinence); project work for Avanir's Zenvia (dual action glutamate inhibitor); and interactive convention work for J&J's Acuvue contact lens

franchise. Leo Pharma's Taclonex and Taclonex Scalp were also won last year (AOR status was awarded).

Another layer of partners were added last year, further strengthening Concentric's model of putting senior talent on all business. Michael Banner was named managing partner, director of client services; Chris Runge and Adam Cohen were both named managing partner, creative director. Ending 2009, worldwide headcount stood at 60. It's since increased to 70. Begasse reports about four layoffs in early 2009, noting they were based on account shifts (FDA delay and a client sale).

Highlights of last year included work on Acuvue, for which Begasse says that the agency delivered a 1700% increase in ROI (with a decreased spend) compared to 2008. The campaign has been nominated for an internal J&J award.

Digital is fully integrated at Concentric. Begasse notes the importance of figuring out how to "navigate digital the space in a way that's ethical and allows... marketers flexibility to react quickly to customer feedback." The agency will continue to invest in digital expertise, especially in social media. Begasse is committed to staying ahead of clients' increasingly sophisticated needs. He's currently looking for a digital strategist and a digital analytics expert.

Network consolidation concerns Begasse because he says it perpetuates commoditization of agencies. A global agency consolidation with WPP will soon claim Bayer, a client Concentric has worked with successfully for more than four years.



**Above: A professional campaign for Pfizer Nutrition; Top: A Pfizer "pod ride" featuring Toviaz and Viagra**

"Consolidation creates some major conflicts in the client/agency relationship when marketers are forced to work within an agency network they might not feel fits as well as it should," Begasse explains. "Consolidation is definitely financially driven. It's more about controlling bottom line as opposed to top line. A good client/agency relationship can drive top-line business. It's alarming that some potential clients can't even think about what Concentric can do for them."

Focus for the rest of the year includes multiple product launches and exploration of emerging markets.

"Emerging markets...present great growth opportunities for clients and the agency," Begasse says. "We'll be looking at China very soon." —Tanya Lewis