

**AT THE HELM**

Andrew Schirmer, EVP,
managing director

PERFORMANCE

Double-digit growth,
mostly organic

HIGHLIGHTS

Grew with existing client
Boehringer Ingelheim on
its diabetes franchise and
Pfizer for Premarin

Added new assignments
for Galderma and Novartis
(on unnamed products)

Enhanced digital and CRM
capabilities with new hire
Gary Frederick

CHALLENGES

Cost-control pressures
and clients' drive for
efficiency

For contact details, ser-
vice offerings and client
roster, see Agency A-to-Z,
beginning on page 169

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—Andrew Schirmer

McCann HumanCare

Existing clients feed growth,
help shop rebound from GSK loss

With social media and digital marketing all the rage these days, one wonders how the shift in focus has impacted a traditional DTC agency like McCann HumanCare.

“We are still doing TV, but we are doing website builds and everything in between,” says EVP, managing director Andrew Schirmer. Clients, he says, urge him to stay focused on the big awareness-building work, which continues to drive their business.

Schirmer says his agency is handling creative development on TV campaigns for five different brands while also building six websites and developing CRM, e-mail and online advertising programs. “Those are literally the extremes of what we’re doing,” he says. “It indicates breadth.”

The level of activity wasn’t a given considering that this Interpublic Group shop, a member of McCann Healthcare Worldwide, lost big account Cervarix from GlaxoSmithKline last year. HumanCare had worked on the HPV vaccine for four years before the British marketer ceased funding across the consumer effort.

“That affected us significantly,” recalls Schirmer. “Times of catharsis are often good times for change, and we saw some bets pay off.”

Those bets, which included staffing up in the digital area, contributed to double-digit growth, mostly the organic kind. The agency, which had managed Zantac OTC for Boehringer Ingelheim’s consumer health group, landed the company’s diabetes franchise after a review last summer.

HumanCare has long handled Pfizer’s overactive bladder franchise including Toviaz and last year pitched and won its Premarin vaginal cream business. Similar scenarios played out at Galderma and Novartis, where

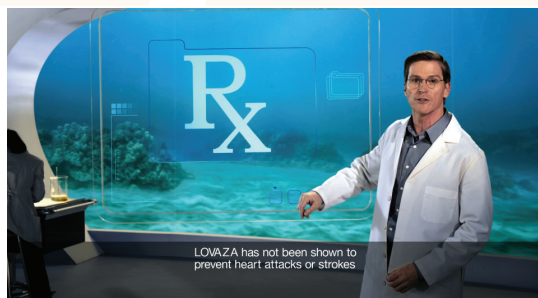
the agency was awarded new assignments on products yet to be disclosed. Johnson & Johnson Vision Care, a longtime McCann Erickson client which Schirmer leads across US, London and Japan, continues to grow.

“We also expanded our digital and CRM work for most new brands that we have brought in, as well as taking over that responsibility for some of the brands we already had,” he says. To enhance in-house digital and CRM capabilities, the agency brought in Gary Frederick from MRM Princeton last fall.

In addition, a core group of people within McCann’s consumer digital offering, who had been spending all or most of their time on healthcare business, have been reassigned to HumanCare, and the agency has strengthened digital project management through outside hires, including new joiner Mariusz Pisarek from Digitas Health who now runs the Novartis account.

Overall headcount is now between 50 and 65 people. When others connected to the business outside the US are factored in, the number could easily double.

The agency has had no other client defections or



Above: A DTC TV ad for GlaxoSmithKline’s Lovaza, indicated to lower high triglycerides in the blood

regulatory snafus. Long term, HumanCare is only starting at a loss of patent protection for one roster brand: Reclast, the Novartis osteoporosis drug set to face generic competition in 2013.

Schirmer’s biggest challenges are the cost-control pressures that come with working for a public company, clients’ drive for efficiency and cost effectiveness and “keeping, incentivizing and motivating talent.”

While he’s embraced digital, the EVP is not about to abandon his agency’s bread and butter. “I don’t believe this business is going to an all-digital platform in the near future. I’ve believed for years that it will be a blend of multichannel communications for the consumer.” — Marc Iskowitz