

# ICC Lowe

MM&M's Agency of the Year enjoys expansion, wins and lots of pitches



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—Steve Viviano

**I**CC Lowe CEO Steve Viviano says that “right now is probably the busiest I’ve seen our agency in the last five or six years. We’re in probably the final third of about 20 new business opportunities within the last six to eight weeks. It’s just uncanny.”

The increased activity is positively bothering Viviano, in the sense that he wonders whether it has something to do with the timing of ICC Lowe earning *MM&M’s* Agency/Network of the Year for 2012, or if it points to more opportunity finally opening up in healthcare.

Regardless, it’s a nice spot to be in. And if any of the pitches come through, they will add to a 12-month period marked by 56 wins for the worldwide network, which Viviano says is up about 10% in headcount to roughly 400. A lone loss came in early 2011, when ICC Lowe Pace lost Bayer’s Nexavar (kidney cancer) in a procurement-driven consolidation to Omnicom.

Viviano says business development has agitated him in another way, in that it’s distracted him from his original plan, which was to spend more time crisscrossing the globe to build his one-year-old brand.

Last year Interpublic Group’s Lowe & Partners gave him the go-ahead to rebrand ICC as ICC Lowe and to grow healthcare within Lowe & Partners under this new marquee. Viviano named former business consultant Sheri Thornberg to head up the global expansion effort. “She was going to help me with acquisitions but, frankly, she’s been all-hands-on-deck working on pitches with the rest of us,” says Viviano.

Still, ICC Lowe has brought more agencies into the ICC Lowe fold, with the next in line likely to be the Lowe & Partners shop in Mumbai, India. He discloses that London and Zurich are the only wholly owned European agencies; Germany, France, Spain and Italy are affiliated but not wholly owned. Considering the significant Lowe business there, the Far East and South America are likely to come next.

For now, new business is the priority, and the challenge. “It feels like you win the first 10 pitches just to get even vs. last year, says Viviano. “And you need to win the second 10 or 20 or so to grow. Whatever the [break-even] number used to be, it’s double now.”

Viviano says he made seven announcements of new-business wins just during the first week of May, while his staff handled four pitches in one week in June, everywhere from New Jersey to Basel to London. In addition to becoming more plentiful, each pitch is getting more complex, involving multiple shops throughout the retooled and ever-expanding network.

“It’s a large level of collaboration, global insight development, vetting of creative around the world,” describes Viviano. “But when you win them, it’s fantastic, because... you get seven, eight business opportunities out of one pitch.”



**From left: A piece promoting Agfa Health-Care’s Imaging Clinical Information system, a promotion for Roberto’s Kids an organization that aims to develop social responsibility through youth baseball**

For instance, ICC Lowe won a Novartis pre-launch agent known as LCQ 908, intended to treat familial chylomicronemia syndrome (severely high triglyceride levels), after a pitch led by ICC Lowe Trio. The assignment entails promotion, med ed and digital, in multiple countries—the US, Switzerland and Germany.

Trio made another successful pitch, a med-ed AOR assignment for Boehringer Ingelheim COPD brands olodaterol and a combination of olodaterol + piatropium. Trio shares the work with ICC Lowe London.

These wins were among 35 large-scale med-ed initiatives during the rolling 12-month period for nine different clients, including KOL advocacy and other branded work. Moreover, the wins, insists Viviano, “are

proof points that the model we've created definitely works"—getting all the agencies to work together under a core platform, even affiliates like the German office that operate under the ICC Lowe badge and process but are not wholly owned by the network.

The CEO calls establishing this new brand his greatest achievement since opening Integrated Communications 25 years ago, when the name referred to having medical, creative and strategy under one roof. "Everyone's doing that now," he says. "To me, the big-

**Placing Johnson's baby wash in a bassinet is a way to emphasize the product's gentleness**

ger achievement is this notion that we can stay being integrated but redefine what it means."

While flagship agency ICC Lowe in New Jersey, ICC Lowe NY, ICC Lowe London and ICC Lowe Zurich shared in several of these big wins, the highlights belong to the US conflict shops, ICC Lowe Trio and Pace.

ICC Lowe Trio has grown between 80%–100% over the last 18–24 months, has had very low turnover and recently moved into larger quarters. "They're our growth engine right now," Viviano says of the six-year-old agency headed by GM Renee Wills.

Trio's book of business ranges from devices (J&J Vision Care's Acuvue lenses) to drugs (olodaterol); from professional brands (Listerine, Reach toothbrushes and floss, Neosporin Eczema Essentials) to consumer brands (J&J Baby); and from mass-market brands (AstraZeneca's statin Crestor) to specialty ones (LCQ 908).

ICC Lowe Pace handled global pre-launch activities this past year for Vertex cystic fibrosis drug Kalydeco, in a multi-channel effort that made use of web and iPad technologies, global relationship marketing, and traditional outlets (journal ads and congresses). Fol-



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56 wins for the world-wide network

Staff up about 10% to roughly 400

**HIGHLIGHTS**  
Named MM&M Agency/Network of the Year for 2012

On a global campaign to bring more agencies into the ICC fold, with the next likely candidate the Lowe & Partners shop in Mumbai

Conflict shop ICC Lowe Trio experiencing 80%–100% growth over the last 18–24 months

Tech-focused shops Redshift and Thermal bring in significant new work

Big agency wins from Novartis and Boehringer Ingelheim.

Getting all of the various agencies under the ICC Lowe banner to work together under a core platform

**CHALLENGES**  
Lost Bayer's kidney-cancer medication Nexavar

Balancing fast pace of pitches with attempts to grow the firm

*For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 181*

lowing FDA approval, the agency developed the global brand and launch campaign as well. Key hire Margaret Anne Ingram joined as SVP, management supervisor, to take over the Vertex account.

In early 2012, this agency also won additional work from GlaxoSmithKline for its erectile dysfunction franchise, Levitra and Staxyn. GSK triglyceride-lowering product Lovaza had already been on the roster.

ICC Lowe Redshift, the emerging technologies unit, won Agfa HealthCare's ICIS—a new class of

**A graphically striking depiction of lungs is used to promote Sunovion's asthma medication Alvesco**

enterprise imaging management. In the EHR/IT and radiology categories, Redshift landed additional work from Nuance in speech-understanding technology, and from ETView to launch that firm's new endotracheal product VivaSight.

Interactive strategy shop ICC Lowe Thermal, which had been going after the digital business from existing ICC Lowe roster clients, has actually won two on its own: sales training agency Millennium Communications Group and BioMarin Pharmaceuticals, which specializes in treatments for rare genetic disease.

The network's next step is to get the global expansion back on track. In addition to finalizing India, another wholly owned office, Viviano has his sights set on Brazil and finding an acquisition to complete the network in Europe, as well to acquire new services in the US. In addition, he plans on creating a set of best practices that lay out what it means to join ICC Lowe.

"Lowe has basically said, 'Go build healthcare under the ICC Lowe brand, in whatever form that means. Organically grow it. Build it out of Lowe. Acquire it if you have to.' And we're looking at all of it. We're looking at everything." — Marc Iskowitz