



AT THE HELM

Matt Brown, president

PERFORMANCE

Revenue grew about 9% last year, reaching \$28 million

HIGHLIGHTS

Landed more than 15 accounts in 2011, including work for Endo, Eli Lilly and Vertex

Acquired San Diego mobile shop Syndicated Methods

Several new management hires bolstered the agency's leadership team

CHALLENGES

Lost Lundbeck account to consolidation

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

“Everyone we hire and every way we think pulls through digital”

—Fabio Gratton

Ignite Health

Bolstering mobile and digital bring inVentiv shop into the big leagues

Irvine, CA-headquartered inVentiv shop Ignite Health pretty much doubled in size between 2008 and 2011, with revenue increasing from about \$14 million to \$28 million. Growth over 2010 was comparatively slow (close to 9%). President Matt Brown says 2011 “felt like we weren’t drinking through the firehose,” which provided opportunity to restructure.

“We needed to bolster a strong leadership team that could play at the scale and level we were achieving,” Brown explains. “We weren’t a small Irvine shop anymore—we had big business to run.”

Several functions were consolidated and streamlined, and mobile and engagement were both reengineering. Headcount was down from about 165 to 135 (26 positions were eliminated).

After the acquisition of San Diego mobile shop Syndicated Methods last June, founder and CEO Michael Smallwood was named VP, technology and mobile. AJ Triano joined this year as VP, mobile engagement.

“It was critical to bolster mobile,” Brown says. “Additionally, we needed to bolster how we operate in terms of processes and put some strong discipline around how we get our best digital thinking, scale it and make it scalable for the future. We ensured that [our innovation offering] Ignite Labs is staffed appropriately, and we’re putting resources behind that. We’re ensuring that we can do what we’ve always been good at and known for at a scale that fits our size and the type of opportunities we have now.”

Nico Coetzee was hired as SVP engagement to run the new customer engagement group, which Brown says covers everything from search to media to planning and strategy.

“We’ve pulled digital end to end so it can be embedded in how we think about science, branding, technology and customer engagement,” says chief experience officer Fabio Gratton. “Digital is our native tongue. Everyone we hire and every way we think pulls through digital. We even did away with the idea of ‘digital strategist’ because if you’re a strategist and you’re not doing digital what kind of strategist are you?”

Brian Lefkowitz joined last year as chief creative officer. He promoted Kevin Deegan to executive creative director in Irvine and hired Scott Schindler as creative director in New York. Rob Piscopo joined as VP, finance. Paul Balagot (previously VP, account director) and Ross Fetterolf (previously SVP, digital strategy) were both named SVP, account services.

The agency landed more than 15 accounts last year. Among its AOR wins were business from Endo Pharmaceuticals (pain franchise); Eli Lilly (digital AOR, Forteo); Roche Molecular Systems (digital AOR); Onyx (an oncology product launch); and Vertex (patient AOR and iAOR for cystic fibrosis treatment Kalydeco).



One of Ignite’s projects: the iLasik Impressions Web site, which has information on iLasik surgery

Project assignments came in from Abbott Laboratories (branding for oncology products Linifanib and monoclonal antibody 806); Allergan (LapBand); DePuy (corporate branding); Genentech (branding and a social intelligence reporting assignment for diabetes product Alectazar); and Merck (branding for corporate, vaccine franchise, and Vree, a mobile platform that helps diabetes patients take an active role in controlling their disease).

The agency also brought in digital strategy work for several Upsher Smith CNS products. Joint inVentiv wins included project work on Eisai’s chemo-induced nausea and vomiting treatment Aloxi, and branding project work for UCB Global. Lundbeck was lost to consolidation.

“We’re focused on our clients, people and culture—if an opportunity doesn’t advance one of those three we walk away from it,” Brown says. “That will be the underlying simplicity of how we look at our business going forward.” —Tanya Lewis