



**AT THE HELM**

Managing partners (clockwise from top left) Bruce Epstein, Brian Wheeler, Bruce Medd and George Courides

**PERFORMANCE**

Revenue of more than \$12 million in 2011

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Success of the Independent Network in competing for Merck business

New AOR business from Novartis and Genentech

**CHALLENGES**

Maintaining margins in the face of stagnant hourly client rates

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

**“Consumer advertising has always been ahead of medical advertising in digital”**

—Bruce Epstein

# RevHealth

Driven by digital, and finding ways to make agency independence a plus

Revenue and accounts rose at Morristown, NJ-based RevHealth last year. Expanded Merck and Novartis business plus new wins drove revenue above \$12 million, up from about \$10 million in 2010. “We just keep picking up more and more business,” says managing partner Bruce Epstein. “We’re up 40% now for the year.”

One of the biggest highlights of 2011 was the success of the Independent Network, led by Juice Pharma Worldwide, to give a group of independent agencies opportunity to compete for Merck business.

“During its agency consolidation process, Merck gave a group of independent agencies opportunity to compete for business if they could deliver the same efficiencies in process and an expansive level of therapeutic expertise that are often promised by shareholder-owned networks,” Epstein explains. “The Independent Network worked out really well for us.”

As part of the Independent Network wins, RevHealth kept work on Merck’s antibacterial and antifungal franchises and picked up four new products—Bridion, a neuromuscular blockade reversal agent; Brinavess (cardiovascular); Noxafil (antifungal); and Esmeron (anesthesia). All are global AOR status except Esmeron, which is project work.

Novartis awarded US AOR assignments for Arcapta (COPD) and transplant drug Hecoria. Peer-to-peer group First Amendment won promotional education business for Genentech’s Pegasys (HCV). This year, the agency won AOR status for Xolair (allergic asthma), which is co-marketed by Novartis and Genentech.

Other wins included corporate work and an AOR assignment for Rectiv (anal fissures) from Aptalis and two wins from Essilor of America—corporate work for Digital Mobilization and AOR for Optifog.

Professional business on Watson Pharmaceutical’s Generess FE was lost after a disagreement about strategy. Consumer work on the brand was retained.

Headcount jumped from 43 to 53 at the end of 2011,

and it’s up to 61 now. About 12 people were promoted in 2011, and talent was hired at all levels. Chris Ameres, formerly a brand manager at Aptalis, joined to run the Novartis transplant business. Digital staff is at four, and Epstein wants more senior leadership for digital. There are 10 PharmDs on staff—most in account management. Nearly all were Epstein’s students at Rutgers.

Last year’s biggest challenge was maintaining margins even though clients aren’t raising hourly rates.

Epstein says more digital work is being done across almost every brand, and it’s likely the agency’s biggest growth driver. “The business is moving from print to digital,” he says. “We don’t have to reinvent the wheel because generally speaking consumer advertising has always been ahead of medical advertising in digital, so there are great examples we can build off of and make more medicine friendly.”

Epstein thinks the shift towards more specialized drugs just increases the need for smart digital work.



**Among RevHealth’s 2011 work (from top): Essilor of America’s Definity and Novartis’s Arcapta**

“Clearly things are moving towards more specialized drugs, but that doesn’t reduce the need for patients to learn or the need to prepare digital tactics,” he explains. “It reduces the need for mass general advertising. An extensive digital campaign makes a lot more sense, and it’s far more cost effective.”

—Tanya Lewis