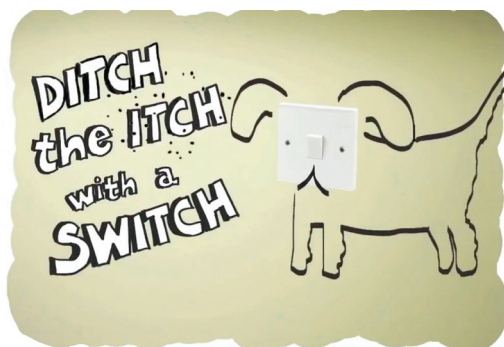


ICC Lowe

Paving the way for the future with
a new digital integration model



“You don’t often get the chance to bring in new senior leadership, but when you make a new step in growth, you get that chance,” says Viviano.

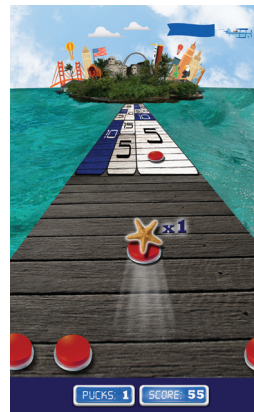
Revenue is “significantly up in 2013,” he reports. While last year his crew won MM&M Agency/Network of the Year and went on to strong double-digit growth both in staff and revenue, “for us, 2011 and 2012 were probably the most challenging years in the last decade,” he says, “but 2013 and 2014 also are going to be much, much more historic for us.”

The worldwide network has expanded since rebranding as ICC Lowe in 2011 and got a license to grow healthcare within Interpublic Group’s Lowe & Partners under this moniker. The network landed 15 accounts over the rolling 12-month period in the US, 26 when you count Europe. These included Allergan’s Botox for the OAB indication, oncology pipeline and launch products for biotechs AP Pharma and Celltech, work for iGenix, a global assignment for the re-launch of Nuron’s meningitis vaccine Meningitec in France, and Swedish firm Orexo’s opioid-dependence drug.

Oh, and there were five product launches in the last eight months, with another eight ongoing. These included Vertex CF drug Kalydeco in 2012 out of the ICC Lowe Pace office, plus a new HIV launch for J&J.

Viviano says winning MM&M AOTY was “a starting line.” The execs have reimagined the finish, and it involves assembling an agency that melds medical direction, a customer insight team and an engagement staff.

The first two already exist within ICC Lowe. Medical is led by chief medical officer Stacy Patterson, who manages a pool of MDs and PhDs offering product differentiation. Customer insights have been bolstered with the hiring of new SVP/branding and strategy, Martin Mannion.



From left: A piece for Merck Animal Health’s Activyl flea-and tick treatment for dogs and cats; a mobile game developed for Biogen Idec

“We wanted to transform the agency to what we think the model for the future can be”

—Steve Viviano

ICC Lowe has been known for bringing together medical, creative and strategy under one roof ever since its founding as Integrated Communications 26 years ago. Now, execs say, they want to fuse medical, customer insight and engagement.

The turning point for this new direction was the hiring of Matt Brown as general manager. Paul O’Neill, who left in April to lead Ogilvy CommonHealth World-Wide wellness marketing, had been promoted from GM to chief growth officer shortly before leaving.

“We wanted to transform the agency to what we think the model for the future can be,” says Steve Viviano, CEO of ICC Lowe, “and that’s why I went out and actively found [someone] who I think will take us there, and that’s Matt.” Brown’s know-how came from running Irvine, Calif.-based inVentiv agency Ignite Health. Brown took Ignite from a small outfit to a \$28-million pure-play digital shop. It’s since merged with inVentiv sibling Palio to form Palio+Ignite.

Brown joins a very stable senior management team, each member of which has over 15 years of experience.

The agency is building out the engagement piece—knowledge of patient and physician channel preferences and an analytic infrastructure. At press time, the principals were interviewing candidates for the job of SVP/engagement. Already brought on-board is an SVP of operations and technology, Sophy Regulous, tasked with aligning operations and IT. “Sophy will be integral to [the new model],” says Viviano.

ICC Lowe’s plan involves becoming, like Ignite Health once was, 100% digital. ICC Lowe Thermal,

ICC Lowe's one-time "digital" unit, will be more of an innovation lab, led by Eugene Lee, chief innovation officer. The content-generation side, led by ICC Lowe chief creative officer Chet Moss, is key. "Agencies that jumped on digital early didn't keep up on content-generation," says Viviano. "This agency never lost the story-telling piece," says Brown. "Now, we will add the innovation that perpetuates that narrative piece."



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(Which could mean a lot more burnt sausages to enjoy.)

AstraZeneca generon **SafeSystem**

DELIVERING SURVIVAL OUTCOMES TOGETHER

From top: an ICC Lowe piece done for Tillotts Pharma; an advertisement created for AstraZeneca's prostate-cancer treatment Zoladex

Preparations are underway at the main office, ICC Lowe in New Jersey, to create an engagement space, a lab-like atmosphere where it will be possible to plan a brand's strategy, medical insights and engagement in one area. These plans follow solid growth. The NJ office enjoyed 15-20% higher sales last year.

As for the US-based conflict shops, ICC Lowe Trio's billings were up by double digits on the back of five wins (see separate profile, p. 109), while ICC Lowe Pace moved into new space that's double the size of its old quarters. "They're growing massively," Viviano says of Pace, a significant win for which was the professional, global AOR account for Piramal's florbetaben, a PET radio tracer used to detect beta-amyloid in the brain.

ICC Lowe Redshift, the device shop, will be overseen by Brown and continue to work on clients such as the TYRX antibacterial envelope.

Viviano counts his biggest achievement as increased globalization and the continuation of his plan to build out healthcare within Lowe. The network has 14 offices after Mumbai agreed to rebrand as ICC Lowe, from LinHealth, which Viviano says is the number one or two healthcare agency in India. Plans call for that office to become the hub for APAC, which could bring three to four more offices into the fold: Singapore, Tokyo and beyond. A Sao Paulo, Brazil, location also joined during the year.

Viviano would like to see the network reach 20-25 offices. "We're not looking to be McCann Health with 70 offices," he says. There was one setback: "We basically closed our New York office," acknowledges Viviano. Its anchor client, Baxter, brought its mostly project-based work to a local Chicago shop.

But the agency/network expects a positive 2013. "When we launch the new model, we're anticipating incremental growth off that," says Viviano. Staffing for it has been a challenge, though. The network hired 70 across offices, including 13 digital. It promoted 42, and five switched offices, which, Viviano says, "we're proud of because we're trying to operate as a collective agency."

Headcount is 300 in the wholly owned offices and another 100 in the affiliated ones. The network has 42 openings now, including about 30 tied to the engagement plan. "We have an internal recruiter," says Viviano. "He's the hardest-working guy in the agency now."

—Marc Iskowitz



PERFORMANCE

Steve Viviano, CEO

PERFORMANCE

"Strong double-digit growth both in staff and revenue"

70 new hires across the network's offices, bringing headcount to 300

HIGHLIGHTS

Network landed 15 US accounts over 12 months, 26 when Europe is taken into account

New business included work for Allergan, AP Pharma, Celltech and iGenix

Involved in five product launches over the past eight months, including Kalydeco and an HIV launch for J&J

Plans underway to build a lab-like engagement space at network headquarters

Conflict shop ICC Pace is "growing massively," winning global account for florbetaben

CHALLENGES

Due to loss of Baxter business, network "basically closed" its New York office

Coming back from a "challenging" 2011 and 2012

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 187