



AT THE HELM

Nick Calandrillo,
chief creative officer;
Dwayne Hann,
president

PERFORMANCE

Grew by about 12%

HIGHLIGHTS

Brought in new work from Becton, Dickinson & Co. and Akrimax Pharmaceuticals

Digital assignments now responsible for more than 50% of agency revenue

CHALLENGES

Getting back to the same revenue levels the agency achieved before the Graceway bankruptcy

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

Metaphor

Dealing with a big loss leads to opportunities for new success

Metaphor spent 2012 recovering from the disaster that struck the agency when Graceway Pharmaceuticals went into bankruptcy after losing exclusivity for one of its most important drugs. In the wake of losing business from that major client, Metaphor had to lay off seven of its 22 staffers.

While progress has been made in recent months, the Parsippany, N.J.-based agency still has a ways to go before it's back to where it was.

"We're still feeling effects of 2011 to some extent," says Dwayne Hann, the company president. "It's taken longer than we hoped it would take, but we're on really strong footing right now."

In 2012, Metaphor grew about 12%, thanks to additional work coming in from Becton, Dickinson & Co. and Akrimax Pharmaceuticals, both already existing clients. Metaphor also began project work with Fresenius, the largest dialysis service provider in the world. When 2013 ends, Hann expects Metaphor's revenue to at least be back where it was before the Graceway implosion.

That optimism is thanks in part to a couple of new-business opportunities that, at press time, Hann couldn't detail other than to say one is a dermatology therapy and the other a respiratory therapy. Both of the therapies are produced by startup companies where, Hann says, "we feel most comfortable and we bring

most to the table in terms of corporate branding and for new product branding."

Digital assignments are now responsible for over 50% of the agency's revenue, and with the growth of mobile, more opportunities to develop apps have been presented to Metaphor.

"For a lot of these companies, the situation is: 'We've given our salesforce iPads, so now what?'" Hann said, adding that Metaphor is working on its fourth app with Fresenius. They've been both sales-force and customer-oriented.

There are two industry trends that Hann says are currently having a notable impact on business. The first of them is the Obamacare-driven trend of hospitals buying up local physicians' groups. "This affects how we target audiences," he says. "It's changing the roles of office nurses and nurse administrators. Some practices are hiring lab techs."

The second trend is "a greater emphasis on point-of-care and point-of-care products, whether drugs or diagnostic tools, so physicians don't have to send patients to a lab and risk losing those patients."

Becton, Dickinson is at the forefront of the point-of-care trend. With Metaphor, it launched the BD Veritor System for rapid detection of Flu A and B. Indications are that it's done well—the product is called out in BD's annual report—and Hann regards the work as some of Metaphor's strongest, including a website as well as interactive promotional materials and a BD



Metaphor did a wide range of work for the launch of Becton, Dickinson & Co.'s BD Veritor System

Veritor ad unit that has been the highest scoring ad unit in three different journals.

The tough time has focused Metaphor's attention on new business, something Hann admits the agency hadn't been great at before it lost Graceway. "When you're down, you're forced to pay attention to building new business," he says. "Sometimes you get lazy when things are going well. It's a discipline."

It's also helped Hann to figure out what the agency's strong suit is, as far as the kinds of companies that it can best serve.

"We're trying to focus our new business efforts on smaller, well-funded companies that have differentiated products," Hann says. "That seems to be the sweet spot for us in terms of the experience we can bring to the table for them." —Matthew Creamer

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—Dwayne Hann