



AT THE HELM

Jessica Boden (President), Jerrold Gershon (CEO), Judy Kessel (Founder, Board Chair)

PERFORMANCE

Revenues were up 30% from 2011

HIGHLIGHTS

New business from Hill-Rom, Sterilmed, Gambro, ProVation Medical and Bioventus

Pro-bono Red Eye Rebrand let agency show off its “new nimbleness”

CHALLENGES

Finding ways to bring on more business from outside the medical-device space

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

“We’re in a position where we can start looking wider and broader”

—Jessica Boden

StoneArch

Learning to blow its own horn brings this agency a stream of new clients



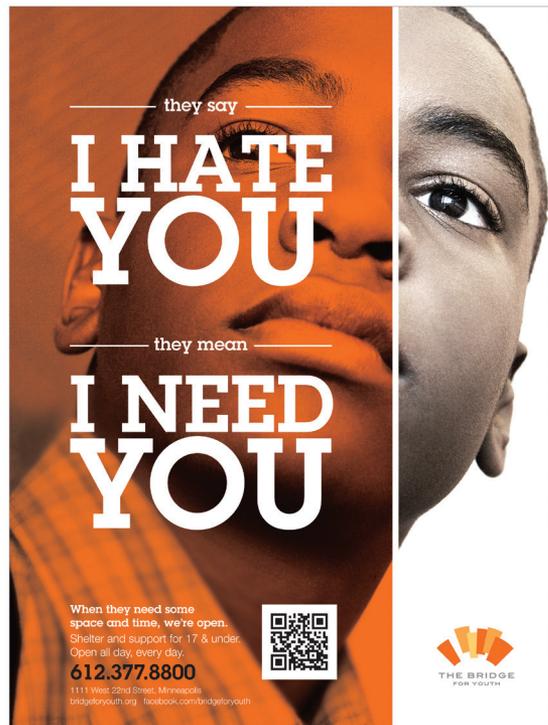
StoneArch’s Jessica Boden pauses for a second before answering a question about her first year as the agency’s president. “I’m really glad to be a sophomore,” she then says. In 2011, she was elevated from the post of executive creative director to lead the Minneapolis-based firm, taking over from founder Judy Kessel (who now chairs the company board). More than a year into her new role, Boden has done the succession plan proud, driving 2012 revenues to \$8.7 million — up 30% from 2011 — and putting StoneArch in line to crack the \$10 million mark this year or next.

At the same time, Boden acknowledges the relative uniqueness of her trajectory. “It’s not often you see the lead creative person promoted into a job like this. I think I had the support of the team, but I was a little unproven,” she admits. To ease the transition, StoneArch rejiggered its hierarchy so that Boden could ease back on her day-to-day responsibilities and take a bigger-picture view of the business. “I learned when to be involved and when to delegate. I started to follow the adage ‘trust but verify,’” she says with a laugh.

StoneArch did a mini-rebranding as well, dropping “Creative” from its name and redesigning its logo and website. “We’re one-namers now. We’re just like Madonna or Cher,” Boden deadpans. She’s joking, but StoneArch appears to have more organizational self-esteem than at any time in its 29-year history.

Clients agree with the sentiment. Boden says 2012 was “transformative” in terms of new business, with 20% of revenue coming from just-added clients. Hospital bed and surgical equipment manufacturer Hill-Rom and medical-device reprocessing company Sterilmed hired StoneArch for integrated campaigns. Other additions included kidney and liver dialysis specialists Gambro, EHR/records storage firm ProVation Medical and orthopedic product provider Bioventus.

When asked to identify a project of which she’s particularly proud, however, Boden points to the agency’s first-ever Red Eye Rebrand. StoneArch called on clients, members of the local community and pretty much anyone else who was able to log on to the internet to choose among local nonprofit groups that needed marketing assistance. The winner, with 18,000 votes, was The Bridge For Youth, a Minneapolis organization that supports at-risk teenagers. As part of the pro bono Red Eye Rebrand, StoneArch staffers stayed awake for 24 straight hours, during which they overhauled all aspects of the Bridge For Youth brand. Donations spiked in the months that followed.



An ovarian-cancer awareness campaign (above left) and pro bono work for the Bridge For Youth (above)

“Personally, it was really emotional,” Boden recalls. “Professionally, I think it signified our new nimbleness.” She makes no promises, but another Red Eye Rebrand will likely be added to the 2013 slate.

Beyond that, look for StoneArch to cautiously explore opportunities beyond the medical-device space. “We’re always going to be focused in that arena, but I think we’re in a position where we can start looking wider and broader,” Boden reports. “See a need, fill a need’ — that’s how we’re looking at it.” —Larry Dobrow