

K.C. exports



L-R: Faruk Capan, CEO, and Wendy Blackburn, EVP, Intouch Solutions; Opposite, top: DTC print for NovoCure's NovoTTF; bottom: work for non-profit Skin of Steel

Kansas City-headquartered Intouch Solutions ended 2013 with about \$70 million in revenue (up about 35% over 2012), and 465 employees. That's seven times the revenue and nearly five times the number of employees it had five years ago.

The 14-year-old, full-service interactive shop has averaged more than 30% annual revenue growth over the past five years, and CEO Faruk Capan points out that if it stays its current course, it could be a billion-dollar company in another 14 years. "Like a blockbuster," he laughs.

But becoming a billion-dollar agency is not Capan's goal, even if it were in the cards. His main focus is driving "purposeful engagement" for clients. "We attribute a lot of our success to our customer focus," adds EVP Wendy Blackburn. "We want to ensure every contact our clients have with every customer has a meaning and purpose."

As opposed to putting branding or messaging first, she says, Intouch makes sure the customer's unique needs are front-and-center. "Digital has a great power to meet those needs and engage on customers' terms."

Intouch has been extraordinarily successful at recruiting talent (220 new employees have joined since 2012), retaining employees and clients, and winning new business. Employee turnover is an impressive 10% (about 25 employees celebrated their five- and 10-year anniversaries in 2013). That has bred client loyalty: the agency's top 10 have an average

BY THE NUMBERS

- Headcount up 16% in 2013
- 120 new joiners in 2013
- Revenue up 35% in 2013 to ~\$70M
- 22 account wins, including 1 AOR
- 12 large and/or new-brand organic wins
- Overall roster: 95% pharma/animal health vs. 5% devices/diagnostics

web savvy

tenure of seven years, and nearly half have been around four or more years.

Ten of 22 account wins in 2013 were brand-new relationships. Overall, the roster is about evenly split between consumer- and HCP-facing work. In September, a group of five in the Chicago office who handle professional work was dubbed “Intouch Science.”

Even though Intouch is not AOR for most of its clients, it handles multiple brands for the majority, including Sanofi, Teva, Baxter, Bayer, Eisai, Galderma, Genzyme and Gilead.

“Our competition includes traditional brand agencies, but we [increasingly] also compete with big consulting companies and IT companies,” Capan says. Blackburn says that while pharma is still “very much at the core” of the agency’s work, “we don’t want all our eggs in one basket. We get better every year about being more selective about the work we go after.”

Stand-out work last year included Sanofi’s award-winning “Get Blood Sugar Control” YouTube channel, which invites diabetes patients to submit questions that Sanofi answers in

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Reference: 1. Instructions for use: NovoTTF-100A System. Novocure; 2012.

novocure

short video responses, and Given Imaging’s (now Covidien’s) Pill-Cam website. Both epitomize the shop’s “purposeful engagement” approach.

Intouch has innovated on the product front, too, with Pharmawall, Share Send Save and SSSShare.it—products designed to help clients compliantly engage on social channels—and a fourth social product is slated for release in Q1’14.

Capan feels Big Data is coming of age and can help with predictive modeling, on-the-fly targeting and personalization across all channels. “Clients are very excited about it and everyone is trying to figure out how they can push the envelope,” he says.

Other plans for 2014 include continuing to expand social and mobile work and helping clients understand the implications of the Affordable Care Act. Blackburn notes there’s also a lot of momentum around content marketing, which many big pharmas are integrating into programs. And, Intouch will look to drive purposeful engagement. Says Blackburn, “We’re focused on getting results for clients as opposed to selling more work.”

Intouch wasn’t the only interactive shop to impress *MM&M* editors. In the AOTY running were Publicis’s Digitas Health and indie Klick Health, as well as Heartbeat Ideas, which went bicoastal and saw a 58% revenue spike before being bought by PHCG. Runners-up also included Draftfcb Healthcare, which snagged 25 new assignments, and fellow IPG shops ICC Lowe and McCann Torre Lazur, both of which saw double-digit growth in revenue and staff. — Tanya Lewis

SKIN OF STEEL

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