



AT THE HELM

Kerry Hilton, partner and CEO; Nancy Beesley, partner and CMO

PERFORMANCE

Revenue rose from \$8.1 million in 2012 to \$9.3 million in 2013

HIGHLIGHTS

Won AOR status on work for On-X Life Technologies, AposTherapy and Texas Center for Proton Therapy

Executed several apps for Johns Hopkins

Formed a partnership with Topin & Associates

CHALLENGES

Adapting to the increased importance of ROI

For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 183

"The days of the big, broad campaign that goes into hyperspace are over"

—Nancy Beesley

HCB Health

Expertise in digital and devices nets record year for Austin agency



HCB Health had a record year. Revenue was up at the Austin-based agency, going from \$8.1 million in 2012 to \$9.3 million, and full-time employees increased from 45 to 65.

"It was our best year ever by far," says partner and CEO Nancy Beesley. "We expanded our client base and our office space, hired a lot of new staff, including a full-time HR director, increased our digital offerings to meet client demand, and reached and exceeded a financial milestone."

Last year Beesley reported that HCB had established itself "as a premiere device agency" and realigned around the expertise. Wins are now becoming more diversified.

"Our digital work and our creative work in devices has caught the attention of other companies," explains partner and CEO Kerry Hilton. "Rather than [declining business], we're stretching into pharma. We're not really seeking it—it's coming our way. If a large oncology company that isn't in devices reaches out to you, you consider it."

A recent example of new non-device work is last year's assignment to develop and launch Johns Hopkins' "PoopMD" app, which allows parents to identify

and distinguish between worrisome and normal stools.

"It's a groundbreaking self-diagnosis and education tool," Beesley says. "This year Johns Hopkins assigned us another app for autism."

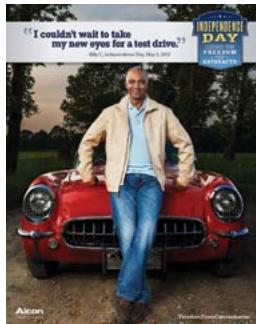
Work expanded quite a bit last year with long-time client Alcon. New assignments included DTC work on a cataract awareness program, which represents Alcon's first foray into DTC for its surgical business. The company also awarded responsibility for its "Cataract Refractive Suite," which involved launching multiple interconnected surgical devices at the same time (two were brand-new devices).

HCB also won AOR status for the US launch of On-X Life Technologies' On-X Plus 1.5 Aortic Heart Valve (pending approval of an expanded labeling claim); an AOR assignment for US DTC work on a new device from AposTherapy; and AOR status for branding and promotional work for Texas Center for Proton Therapy.

A strategic alliance was formed last year with Chicago shop Topin & Associates that's expanding both agencies' reach. This year the agencies jointly won a new product launch from CareFusion.

A new internal structure called "client pods" was instated last year. "Every client has a pod cluster focusing on their business—it's like a mini agency within the agency," Beesley explains. "Creative, account and digital staff members are all clustered together physically so they move work more effectively and efficiently."

HCB University was established last year to ensure employees understand all clients' businesses. Twenty-four courses with three levels of certification cover topics such as the dynamics of surgery.



From left: Cancer-awareness work for the THANC Foundation and a piece promoting Alcon's FreedomFrom Cataracts.com

As ROI is becoming increasingly critical for all clients, HCB established a new company early this year called "Luminate Analytics" with Austin-based healthcare analytics specialist Kelly Myers at the helm.

"We're shifting the entire agency overall to focus more on ROI," Beesley says. "The days of the big, broad ad campaign that goes into hyperspace are over. Luminate provides tools to help clients access data, look for trends and make their dollars work effectively."

Hilton and Beesley expect another good year. Eight new clients have joined the roster, and the partners hint at products Luminate will launch, describing them as "unique digital products that flow out of the analytics" and as "software clients can use to identify and reach specific audiences." —Tanya Lewis