



AT THE HELM

Sonja Foster-Storch,
president

PERFORMANCE

Revenue growth of
15% in 2013—the fifth
consecutive year of
double-digit gains

HIGHLIGHTS

Won its first patient-
focused AOR for Eisai's
weight-loss drug Belviq

New work in oncology,
HIV and diabetes from
Galderma, ViiV and
Novo Nordisk

Head count at the
agency has reached
165 employees

CHALLENGES

Figuring out what to
maintain and what to
build on

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

**“Everybody
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on wellness”**

—Sonja Foster-Storch

McCann Echo Torre Lazur

Maintaining a culture that has
brought about long-term success

Making a case for their agency’s unique cultures is something that almost every health-care/pharma agency leader does. And yet in any discussion of McCann Echo Torre Lazur, regardless of whether it’s conducted with people who work there or people who don’t, the first thing that comes up is—yup—the culture. Of all the agencies in the New York/New Jersey pharma corridor, in fact, McCann Echo is the one most often singled out for the camaraderie and progressive attitude that pervades its culture.

So either McCann Echo has its cultural house seriously in order, or agency president Sonja Foster-Storch has a knack for conveying her excitement—and, by extension, the company’s—that stands out from among her executive-level peers. While she points to weekly programs like The Six Pack Society as morale-boosters (“be clear about this: it’s not our abdomens, it’s our love of beer”), Foster-Storch is quick to note that many of the things that make the McCann Echo culture unique preceded her tenure at the company.

“I went in front of the whole staff on my first day and the first question I was asked was, ‘What are you going to do about the culture?’” she recalls. “I said, ‘Hey, you are the culture, not me. I’m just coming into it.’” She believes a recent office renovation of sorts, in which the company reconfigured its confines to increase the amount of light and open space, further reinforced the community spirit.

Speaking just about a year after her arrival from CDM Princeton, Foster-Storch says that while she was fortunate to have inherited a good situation—her predecessor, Bill McEllen, was promoted to president of McCann Torre Lazur Group, a post in which he oversees McCann Torre Lazur and McCann Echo—she also

faced the challenge of, well, not screwing anything up.

“It’s very easy to come to an agency with a mandate to fix things, because there’s nowhere to go but up,” she explains. “Here, it was mostly a matter of what we wanted to maintain and what we could build on.”

The maintenance component presented a challenge of its own. McCann Echo finished 2013 with revenue growth of 15% over 2012; this represented the fifth consecutive year of double-digit growth, Foster-Storch reports. The agency also has surged in size to 165 employees, even with “at least a dozen open positions across every discipline,” she says.

So far, everything seems to be working. On the new-client front, McCann Echo broke through with its first patient-focused AOR for Eisai’s weight-loss drug Belviq. The addition, Foster-Storch believes, represents a significant step forward for the agency.

“Any kind of win is exciting,” she explains. “But obesity is rampant and it’s tied to so many other things—cardiovascular disease, diabetes, high blood pressure. It’s the kind of work that’s potentially so important. We have to figure out how to stop the bleeding, so to speak, and reach these people who need to be reached.”



From top: Print and digital work done for Galderma’s Epiduo and Pfizer’s Rebif

Paired with new work in oncology, HIV and diabetes from clients like Galderma Laboratories, ViiV Healthcare and Novo Nordisk, the Belviq assignment pushes McCann Echo closer to where Foster-Storch hopes it will be. “With the exception of maybe one client, we’re deep within franchises,” she says. “We’re doing things that make a difference. I think everybody here needs to feel that we’re having an impact on wellness. That’s why we do this.” —Larry Dobrow