



McCann Regan Campbell Ward

Even a year filled with changes “didn’t change who we were”

AT THE HELM

Clockwise from top left: Susan Duffy, Jeff Sweeney, Colleen Hindsley and Dan Hassan

PERFORMANCE

Firm is on “a great trajectory of transformation” according to Duffy

HIGHLIGHTS

Garnered additional work from Alexion and Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company

A big account win from Medac Pharma for an imminent launch

CHALLENGES

Dealing with the implications of agency-wide changes

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



McCann parent Interpublic Group’s acquisition of the company now known as McCann Regan Campbell Ward (MRCW) set a fair amount of change in motion during 2012. But little did anyone realize then that 2012 would be remembered as a mere opening act for what followed in 2013.

Of the individuals featured in a post-acquisition photo of agency leaders, only one—MRCW west coast president Jeff Sweeney—remains a part of the executive hierarchy. Agency veterans Dan Hassan (executive vice president/chief creative officer) and Colleen Hindsley (executive vice president/director of client service) were promoted into the C-level suite, where they were joined by new president Susan Duffy. Right when Duffy arrived in December, MRCW packed up its bags and moved into the flagship McCann building on Third Avenue in Manhattan.

All of this leads Duffy, previously a senior vice president at Omnicom, to say that the firm “is on a great trajectory of transformation. There have been changes, but we’ve settled in. There’s positive movement going forward.”

To their credit, no member of the Duffy/Hassan/Hindsley executive triumvirate suggests that the change was easily managed. Hassan points to the

steady flow of questions from longtime colleagues. “It was always, ‘Where are we going?’,” he says. “The only way to deal with it was to meet it head-on.” That translated into weekly check-ins with direct reports and informal sit-downs with anyone/everyone else, during which Hassan provided as much reassurance as he could.

Duffy, on the other hand, recalls feeling as if she had “held [her] breath and drank from the fire hose” for the first 90 days of her tenure. “Nobody sugarcoated the changes that needed to take place,” she says. “But I love change. I love embracing ambiguity. I love to figure out problems with people I trust. I kind of knew in the first week that it was a good match.”

The changes proved helpful in another sense, Hindsley adds. “We’ve learned how to communicate better with each other and with clients. When you think about uncertainty—there’s not a handbook on how to handle it well. During the last year, we got a lot of practice.”

Thus MRCW has emerged from the haze of change a stronger company—and one that, Hassan says, retains its “strong rebellious streak.” The first sign that it hadn’t been subsumed amid the reshuffles came when management decided to redecorate the firm’s new space—and promptly turned over the assignment to MRCW staffers. “They put together a plan and did it without our involvement,” Hassan says, sounding like a proud parent. Adds Duffy, “That’s how we like to work. If you come to us with a problem, have a solution. We’ll try it out.”

Amid all the noise, MRCW found time to service existing clients with its usual care and add a handful



MRCW pieces for Zinc & Ors (left) and Livalo from Kowa Pharmaceuticals (above)

more. Alexion awarded the agency a second indication for Soliris, while Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company added work on a prelaunch brand to MRCW’s slate (it already handles lymphoma drug Adcetris). One of the agency’s biggest account wins—Medac Pharma, for an imminent launch—came at a time when it was most needed: on a July day when the change had left MRCW staffers feeling unsettled.

“Medac called up and said, ‘Hey, we’re in the neighborhood,’” Hindsley recalls. “By the end of the meeting the next day, we were hired. That was a ‘hey, we’ve still got it’ moment for us. The change didn’t change who we were.” —Larry Dobrow

“When you think about uncertainty—there’s not a handbook on how to handle it well”

—Colleen Hindsley