

# Integrated Communications

After a five-year hot streak, ICC gets Alchemy to spur further growth



**“We’re at the point now where growth is exceeding our ability to grow people from within”**

—Steve Viviano

Integrated Communications Corp. (ICC) has doubled its revenue and staff size over the last five years, an accomplishment that would please almost any agency executive.

For ICC president and CEO Steve Viviano, “It’s a very good place to be,” he tells *MM&M*. However, growth brings challenge: “We’ve had to evaluate all different kinds of space configurations, because we’ve used up all the space here in this building.”

As Viviano tells it, the reason for his agency’s dramatic rise is a medical department teeming with MDs and a careful approach to choosing which pitches to attend. The agency touts a balanced book of business. Its 12 wins this year have included PriCara’s oral analgesic tapentadol; medical education duties for AstraZeneca and Shire products; and professional advertising on four Johnson & Johnson consumer brands, including its iconic Red Cross First Aid and Band-Aid adhesive bandages.

The agency is in the midst of launching two major hypertension brands for anchor client Novartis, Exforge and Tekturna/Rasilez globally. No accounts were lost,

although Novartis halted all marketing for Zelnorm after pulling the drug off the market due to safety issues—an unavoidable situation for the agency.

ICC’s hot streak did not go unnoticed. In May Interpublic Group put consumer agency Alchemy underneath Viviano’s purview as a way to further growth.

New York City-based Alchemy, which handles creative for several of J&J’s Rx and OTC accounts, had operated autonomously since spinning off from consumer shop Lowe in 2002. It has worked in tandem with ICC on several campaigns before, and now that Alchemy is part of ICC and its network Lowe Healthcare, the two will jointly go after clients by promising professional and DTC advertising under one roof. The restructuring was first reported on *mmm-online.com*.

To land combined business, the agency has hired a leader who understands both types of advertising: Stu Klein has been named Alchemy EVP/general manager. Klein spent two years as president and CEO of KPR, a professional agency, and before that logged 18 years on the consumer packaged goods side and another six at CommonHealth’s Quantum unit.

Sister agency Pace handles several brands for client Barr in much the same way as ICC intends to do with Alchemy. Still, the practice used to be more common than it is now. “What we’re headed toward was more the norm,” Klein says. It’s become less widespread, though, “as business has gotten more specialized and more traditional consumer agencies have played bigger stakes.”

Klein wants to infuse ICC’s scientific understanding, reflected in journal and other forms of advertising targeted at doctors, into his DTC so that all ads stem from the same insight but are stated in appropriate language. “[We’re] really trying to bring more of the ‘why’ into the work—why you should be taking [the drug], why your doctor has said this is right for you,” he explains.

A joint approach to communications could result in more consistency across audiences, something that’s harder to achieve with disparate agencies. “I look around now and, honestly, I don’t see too many examples where you hold up the consumer and professional work and it looks the same,” Klein says. “It makes you wonder: Is there an opportunity there to again reinforce a brand on both sides that really feels like one consistent, perfectly integrated brand.”

In the past, several brands have embraced that opportunity. Sal Perreca, Lowe Healthcare network chairman, calls the Alchemy-ICC late 1998 campaign for contraceptive Ortho Tri-Cyclen’s acne indication “one of the first truly integrated programs.”

Klein also points to Claritin’s 1997 “Blue Skies” work by CommonHealth and Viagra’s “Let the Dance Begin” campaign by Cline Davis & Mann in 1998, two other examples of memorable campaigns whose consumer and professional creative flowed from the same shop.

ICC continues to work closely with other consumer

agencies—Deutsch on Novartis business and with Gotham on Bausch & Lomb business.

“We’ve worked over the last six or seven years with a number of consumer agencies, mostly IPG [agencies]...on 10-15 different brands, where we handle the professional side, they do the consumer side and we work closely together to utilize their planning and our medical to uncover unique insights that drive both sides,” Viviano explains. “We’ve got a pretty good track record of doing this well.”

Viviano adds that ICC’s medical expertise transfers well to the consumer side. “We now have 21 medical directors, 14 of them physicians. That gives us an ability to really get deep into physician insights, which is something that consumer agencies really, really gravitate toward...When we put it together, that’s when the magic happens.”

The union of Alchemy with ICC streamlines decision-making. “With one P&L driving everything, it just removes a lot of hurdles that may exist when you’re working intra-company,” says Viviano. The merger allows ICC to run consumer accounts out of New York, as well as professional ones—extending its jam-packed Parsippany, NJ, space beyond its walls—plus the ability to recruit New York talent, a sometimes tricky task for



**Above: Rabies immunization ad for Sanofi Pasteur  
Top left: Part of a journal ad for Novartis' Starlix**

an agency on this side of the Hudson.

ICC has the staff and IPG’s blessing to pursue hybrid creative. All that’s needed are clients who share the vision. One of the initial firms Viviano and Klein will approach is J&J. “J&J knows Alchemy and Integrated very well as separate agencies,” Viviano says. “Now that we’re one, it will be interesting to see if they embrace this new way to do it—which they’ve been doing for a while—and [see if] we can find more opportunities.”

Integrated has as solid a management team as one can find in the industry, with Viviano, Paul O’Neill as EVP/director of client services, industry veteran Chet Moss as chief creative officer and Stacy Patterson as EVP/director of scientific affairs.



**AT THE HELM**

Steve Viviano, president and CEO

**PERFORMANCE**

Doubled revenue/head count over last 5 years

**HIGHLIGHTS**

Undergoing a rebranding and integrating consumer agency Alchemy

12 wins, including: PriCara’s oral analgesic tapentadol; med ed duties for AstraZeneca (Pulmicort, Merrem) and Shire (Fosrenol); professional advertising on Shire’s SPD 465; two Ross nutritional supplements; and four Johnson & Johnson consumer brands, including Red Cross First Aid and Band-Aid

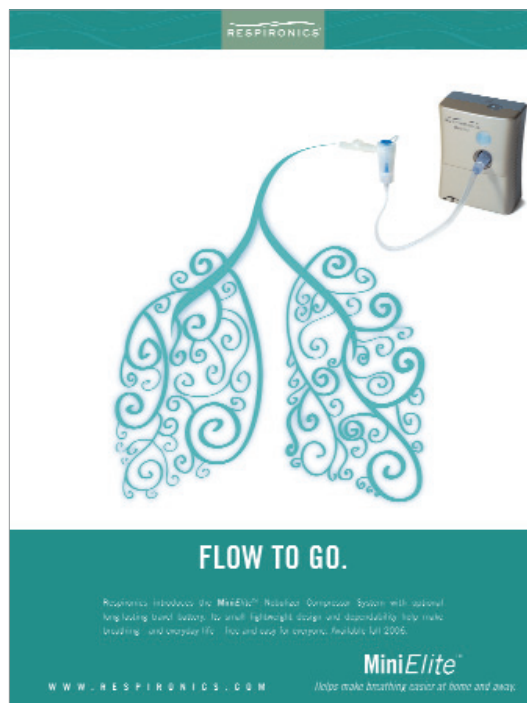
Hired Stu Klein as Alchemy EVP/general manager, Ken Jordan as EVP/management supervisor and Peter Bregman as creative director

**CHALLENGES**

Finding clients for Alchemy

No losses, although Novartis halted marketing for its IBS drug Zelnorm

*For contact details, service offerings and client roster, see Agency A-to-Z, beginning on page 143*



**Ad for Respironics' MiniElite Nebulizer Compressor**

Ken Jordan has joined from Sudler & Hennessey as EVP/management supervisor, sharing account-management duties with O’Neill. And Peter Bregman, who hails from the consumer side, most recently at his own venture 98.6 Million Degrees, takes over as creative director for Chuck DeMarco, who left Integrated to become a CD at ICC sister agency Pace. Bregman is one of four CDs reporting to Moss.

ICC, which is Lowe Healthcare’s flagship unit, has four offices: the Parsippany location with 250 people, a UK office (ICC Europe), Trio Communications (also in New Jersey) and now Alchemy. Total headcount: 310.

“We’re at the point now where growth is exceeding our ability to grow people from within,” Viviano says.

Among other accounts won this past year are AstraZeneca’s respiratory drug Pulmicort and antibiotic Merrem (both med ed), Shire’s Fosrenol for hyperphosphatemia (med ed), Shire’s SPD 465 for ADHD, Ross’ nutritional supplements Juven and Glucerna, and the four J&J consumer brands: Red Cross First Aid, Band-Aid, Cortaid/Cortaid Advanced and Cortaid Poison Ivy Care. GSK’s Levitra came over from WPP in an IPG consolidation. Trio, which launched in 2005 with three Ferring brands, brought in one small account, which Viviano prefers not to name.

While integrating Alchemy into the mix, identifying offerings and finding new clients will be a real challenge for this agency, the future holds even more. ICC is undergoing a rebranding and will relaunch its Web site and advertising, Viviano says. “We’re anxious to introduce the new direction of the agency.”—Marc Iskowitz