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News

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Publisher's Letter



Cracking Open the Secrets To Stellar PR

What do Somali pirates, pistachio nuts and broken guitars have in common? By context of this guidebook, you can probably guess correctly: public relations.

Behind nearly every successful initiative in the marketplace – be it managing a public affairs issue, launching a product, preserving a reputation, getting noticed by the media, mitigating a crisis – there's a smart PR strategy led by a team of hard-working communicators (and sometimes just a team of one). That is what our fifth volume of *PR News' Top 100 Case Studies in PR* is all about.

In this guidebook you will see that not every case study is one that ends happily for the organization or the subjects being represented. Sometimes even the best-laid PR plans cannot win the day. But every case study we've selected for this guidebook highlights best-in-class work that underscores the value of PR.

The case studies herein offer you a wide variety of tactics and strategies from which to learn and apply to your own initiatives. We also chose campaigns that have "aged" just a bit, so there's been time and perspective baked into the stories. You will read how PR played a role in mitigating a serious crisis in the seas when the crew on an industrial shipping company's vessel was taken hostage by Somali pirates. You'll read about the power of social media in a case study about how one guy with a musical background, an idea and the URL to YouTube put United Airlines on the defensive when baggage handlers mishandled his guitar.

If you are in PR, you know it is an art *and* a science. Through interviews with PR team members and key executives, our case study editors are able to give you first-hand accounts of how a campaign was executed – from soup to nuts. About those pistachio nuts referenced earlier – it's not easy to get consumers to pay attention to one brand of nut over another. And it was PR, not advertising or marketing, that led the way in gaining recognition among consumers for the underrated but quite tasty pistachio.

The *Top 100 Case Studies in PR* has only one article about nuts – the rest are about superstars in PR. Through their best practices and lessons learned, you will undoubtedly crack open new ideas and tactics to take your PR to the next level. Best of luck, and keep us posted on your successes!

Sincerely,

Diane Schwartz
Senior Vice President & Group Publisher, *PR News*
Twitter: @dianeschwartz

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Kraft and PR Heat Up Mac & Cheese Facebook Fan Page for Explosive Launch

The Kraft Macaroni & Cheese launch of its new product, Cheddar Explosion, had all the elements of a compelling campaign: an iconic food brand; Texas Stadium, until recently the home of “America’s Team”; passionate testimonials from moms; and a community-minded 11-year-old contest winner, who would get to blow something up. Really, all that was missing was a dog. But yet the key driver of the 2010 campaign’s success would not be any of those elements. Instead a social platform that in its own right has become iconic—Facebook—would be the “hub” of the campaign.

Why social media? The objectives of the campaign were twofold: to build a large community of fans for Kraft Macaroni and Cheese online; and to help launch the new Kraft Macaroni & Cheese Dinner Cheddar Explosion product by driving awareness to moms.

Facebook, says Eileen Rosenfeld, senior brand manager of Kraft Foods, was a natural choice. Yet it was ironic that while moms were a main target, the only existing Facebook page dedicated to Kraft Macaroni & Cheese belonged to a man who lived in Australia. The page had about 30,000 followers—mostly teens and singles, but was inactive, according to Grace Leong, managing partner at New York based **Hunter PR**, the brand’s agency for the campaign.

“We knew from that page that we had a pretty healthy base of folks,” says Leong. “It was like having a mini-research project.” But it wasn’t Kraft’s project. Hunter and Kraft reached out to the page administrator in Australia, but got no response. Following Facebook protocol, Kraft was able to gain control of the page.

As part of the strategy Hunter set the following goals for its Facebook page:

- Migrate 30,000 fans from the unofficial site with few drops.



Photo courtesy: Kelthum PR

Dy-no-mite: Eleven-year-old Casey Rogers of Terrell, Texas (center), gets ready to trigger the implosion of Texas Stadium, officially launching the Kraft Macaroni & Cheese Cheddar Explosion campaign.

- Add an additional 270,000 new fans (majority of whom would be moms) within six months of launch.

A Dynamite Story

Great content has always driven brand awareness in traditional outreach channels, but even on Facebook, there has to be a good story to drive the conversation.

And Kraft cooked up a doozy. At the center of the campaign was Kraft’s sponsorship of the detonation of the Dallas Cowboys’ old home, Texas Stadium, and an essay contest for one child to win the right to “implode” the stadium by pushing the detonation button on April 11, 2010.

The essay contest had a strong community support component. The young entrants would write how they have made a “dynamite difference” in their community. The winner, 11-year-old Casey Rogers, has his own charity organization, Casey’s Heart, which collects and distributes food and clothing to the homeless in downtown Dallas.

They picked a worthy winner, says Leong. “This kid is amazing, and his story lived on online for several months after he won the contest,” she says.

Building the Platform

In a truly integrated effort, the brand, public relations, promotions, media buying and advertising teams began by developing guidelines, posting protocol and establishing a tone for the Facebook page.

Then, based on the Cheddar Explosion product launch marketing campaign and the brand’s ongoing desire to give its mom community “news they could use,” Kraft and Hunter PR developed a six-month content strategy and editorial calendar of daily and weekly Facebook postings.

One of the campaign challenges, says Rosenfeld, was to release content that wouldn’t come across as marketing drivel. “It’s striking a balance between what’s too much information and what’s too little,” she says.

Leong is more pointed: “Facebook is a place where people have a shared interest. It’s not a brand thing, and you shouldn’t try to be the leader or the discussion pusher.”

The scheduled postings centered around the following content areas:

- Kraft Macaroni & Cheese recipes and product news.
- Content that made moms smile (fun quotes, greetings, etc.), react and share their own stories, photos, etc.

- News and information surrounding the contest to find the child who would win the opportunity to press the Texas Stadium detonation button on April 11.

Making an Offer

Hunter and Kraft decided the page would soft launch one month before April 11, to help drive awareness of the Texas Stadium Explosion event and the announcement of Casey Rogers as the contest winner.

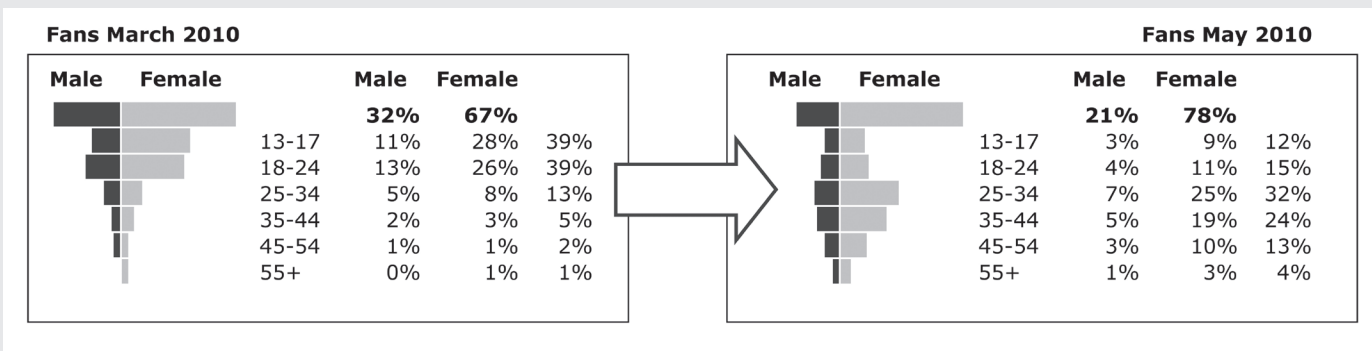
The week prior to the detonation, Hunter and Kraft began to drive fans to the site via ads on Facebook and aggressive mommy blogger outreach. The intent was to bring Facebook users to the “official” fan page and encourage them to “like” the page based on the new Cheddar Explosion content.

Using the implosion day as an occasion to drive more likes for the page, a free coupon offer for Cheddar Explosion was offered, which led to a surge of 180,000 new fans in one week.

Other fan page features during the launch included tabs for the contest; photos/videos from the implosion; and videos of consumers reviewing Cheddar Explosion.

“An offer like a coupon is always good to start out with on Facebook, says Rosenfeld. Yet because of the mapped out content, the page didn’t experience a huge drop-off in interest after the coupon offer expired. “Our other elements kept interest high,” she says.

Selling Macaroni & Cheese: Females Flock to Kraft Facebook Page



One of the goals of the Kraft Macaroni & Cheese Cheddar Explosion campaign was to attract more moms to a Facebook fan page. Through outreach to mom bloggers and content that resonated with that audience, the female-to-male ratio changed dramatically.

Source: Hunter PR

Network Numbers

And interest remained high, to the tune of hundreds of thousands of Mac & Cheese fans. The numbers include:

- Counting the original 30,000 fans that were migrated to the official site from the unofficial site, the Kraft Macaroni & Cheese fan page now has more than 386,000 fans.
- Facebook Insights confirmed that the page successfully managed to attract moms, bringing the percentage of fans in the 25-44 age range (the core Kraft Macaroni & Cheese audience) up to 56%, from 18% (see chart below for details) prior to the start of the program.
- The Kraft Mac & Cheese page is now the second-largest brand Facebook page within the Kraft Foods portfolio, second only to Oreo.
- Early sales numbers (which could not be revealed) for Cheddar Explosion indicate it is being well received by its core audience of moms.

Leong stresses that social media, while inexpensive from a technology point of view, is a drain on time. “There are certain services that monitor pages, but you turn a Facebook page on, you have to have real eyeballs looking at it constantly,” she says.

There’s enough work involved that, according to Macaroni & Cheese brand manager Noelle O’Mara, each Kraft brand has its own team dedicated to administering and monitoring its Facebook page. At the peak, Hunter PR had 10 people working on the product launch, spending all of their time working the launch events, media outreach and Facebook.

One advantage of using a platform like Facebook: measurement. Facebook Insights allowed Kraft and Hunter PR to find out which posts are more effective than others. “We quickly learned what works and what doesn’t,” says Leong.

Regrets? “You always want more time to plan and execute a campaign,” says Leong. Striking a deal with the Dallas Cowboys, for example, was “nail-biting,” she says, because there was little time between the “implosion” and the “Explosion.”

What’s next for Mac & Cheese? It made news by

To Best Leverage Facebook, Follow the Rules of the Road

Grace Leong, managing partner at Hunter PR, learned a lot while working on the Kraft Macaroni & Cheese Cheddar Explosion Facebook page launch. Here are some tips from Leong on how to best leverage the social network:

1. **Map out a “Rules of the Road” section and post it prominently on the brand’s Facebook page.** This gives administrators the ability to state what type of content will and won’t be tolerated and the authority to delete posts that do not measure up.
2. **Design an internal comment and response guide for interacting with Facebook page “likers.”** Sort anticipated questions/comments into low, moderate and high-risk categories and develop a recommended response approach for each.
3. **Create a content strategy and accompanying editorial calendar** to make wall posting seamless and provide useful, interesting or entertaining information that will encourage fan engagement.
4. **Be familiar with Facebook’s Promotions Guidelines** (http://www.facebook.com/promotions_guidelines.php) . Since contests and sweepstakes cannot use Facebook’s primary assets (e.g. the wall, photo tab, video tab), be prepared to create custom tabs and explore ways to leverage Facebook’s assets while still remaining compliant.

hiring homeless broadcaster Ted Williams, who recorded voiceovers for Kraft TV spots. “We have a tradition of helping those in need, and we’re thrilled to help Ted on his journey to reestablish himself,” says O’Mara.

One thing is for sure, Cheddar Explosion is thoroughly established, both in kitchen cupboards and now, on Facebook. **PRN**