

# TOP 100

## Case Studies in PR

Volume 4

# PRNews

**Editorial Director:** Steve Goldstein,  
sgoldstein@accessintel.com

**PR News Editor:** Courtney Barnes, cbarnes@accessintel.com

**Group Editor:** Iris Dorian, idorian@accessintel.com

**PR News Editorial Assistant:** Shaila Mentore,  
smentore@accessintel.com

**Director of Marketing:** Amy Jefferies,  
301.354.1699, ajefferies@accessintel.com

**Assistant Marketing Manager:** Rachel Smar,  
301.354.1613, rsmar@accessintel.com

**Assistant Conference Manager:** Saun Sayamongkhun,  
301.354.1610, ssayamongkhun@accessintel.com

**Designer:** Christina Barnard

**PR News VP/Group Publisher:** Diane Schwartz, 212-621-4964; dschwartz@accessintel.com

**Division President,** Heather Farley

**President & CEO,** Don Pazour

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4 Choke Cherry Road, Second Floor,  
Rockville, MD 20850 USA 888.707.5814

FAX: 301.309.3847 Telex: 358149;  
e-mail: clientservices@accessintel.com

New York Editorial Office:  
110 William St., 11th Floor, New York, NY 10038  
Phone: 212.621.4875 Fax: 212.621.4879

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# EDITOR'S LETTER



## MAKING THE CASE

Public Relations is an often misunderstood profession. To the uninformed, PR is another term for media relations – media pitching, specifically. To others it's the stepchild of Marketing or HR. Even at the college level, it's wrongly considered the less cerebral part of the Communications Department when it's paired with journalism studies.

Those who've benefited from the outcomes of outstanding PR initiatives and campaigns know that Public Relations is among the most powerful tools to influence and impact opinions and strengthen an organization.

If you're reading this book, you get it. You know what PR can do. And you know what the absence of PR can do. But there's still a lot we can learn from our PR peers: new and smarter ways of influencing stakeholders.

When we compile this Guidebook every other year, we look for 100 Top Case Studies across all areas of PR, from crisis management to digital PR to corporate social responsibility to media relations. We bring you a mix of companies of all sizes, and campaign budgets of all levels to give you a behind-the-scenes look at the successes, the mistakes and the lessons learned of all kinds of PR initiatives.

Surely there are more than 100 outstanding examples of well-executed communications campaigns and initiatives. In every case study in this book, you will take away at least one smart communications idea. Think about it: 100 ideas from one book. Start taking notes, applying these ideas and sharing them with us at PR News. We hope your next campaign will be included in the next volume of this Guidebook.

Sincerely,

Diane Schwartz

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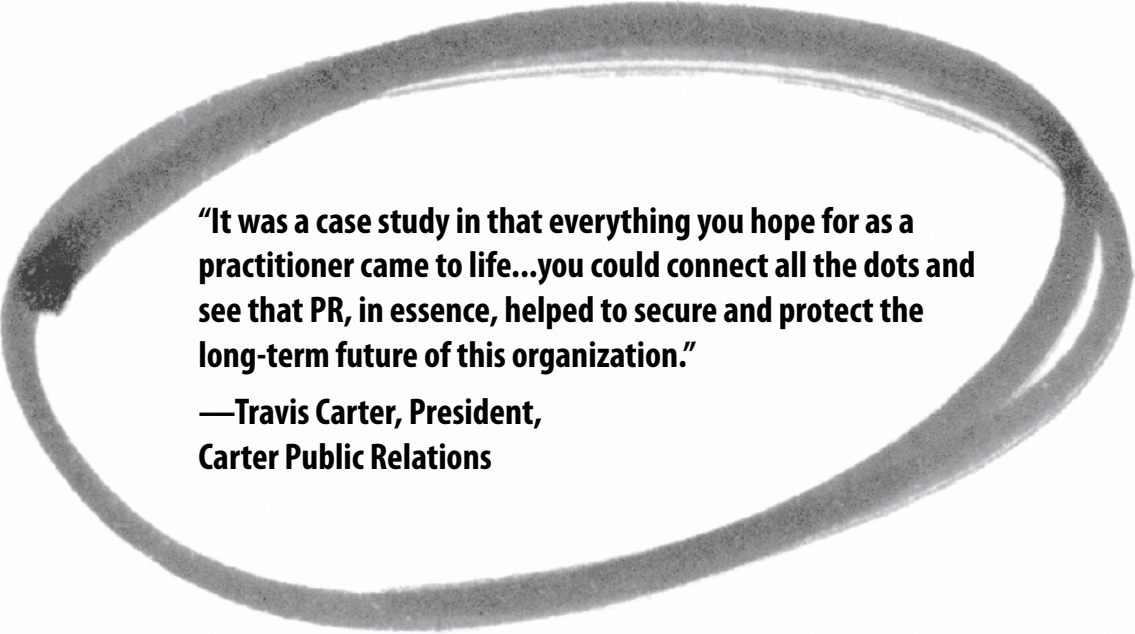
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**"It was a case study in that everything you hope for as a practitioner came to life...you could connect all the dots and see that PR, in essence, helped to secure and protect the long-term future of this organization."**

**—Travis Carter, President,  
Carter Public Relations**



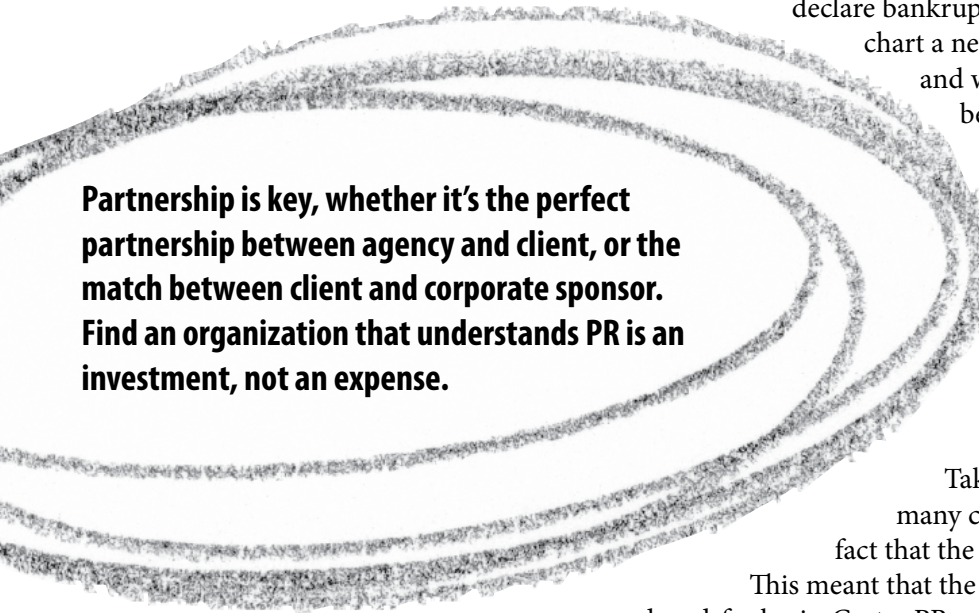


# A PRO BONO PROJECT SHINES LIGHT ON SHAKESPEARE DALLAS AND REFLECTS GLORY ON A PR TEAM

BY PR NEWS EDITORS

Shakespeare Dallas' 35th anniversary was in 2006, but just a few years prior, the company was contemplating bankruptcy. Meager attendance and fiscal mismanagement had nearly destroyed the theatrical production company, which had no PR budget or plans.

Says Travis Carter, president of Carter Public Relations, "A prior leadership team took the company to the brink of economic ruin. We came to that fork in the road: We could declare bankruptcy and fold up our tents, or we could chart a new course. We chose the right direction, and we are emerging. I have no doubt we will become one of the great success stories in the Dallas arts community."



**Partnership is key, whether it's the perfect partnership between agency and client, or the match between client and corporate sponsor. Find an organization that understands PR is an investment, not an expense.**

Carter says "we" because he is chairman of the board of Shakespeare Dallas. Now, the theater company is moving into its 36th year and trying to maintain the momentum from both a PR and business standpoint.

## PR ON A SHOESTRING

Taking on Shakespeare Dallas presented many challenges, not the least of which was the fact that the company had no money to spend on PR.

This meant that the PR campaign would not be billed on a reduced-fee basis; Carter PR would, in fact, conduct it free of charge.

Another big challenge is making sure your agency, as a business organization, gives the pro bono client all of the time and attention it deserves. "You have to make it a priority. It's a commitment that doesn't come easily," Travis notes. Early on, Carter PR made a commitment that if it was going to work with Shakespeare Dallas pro bono, it would give it the same level of dedication and creativity and input that it gives to higher paying, corporate clients. "You owe it to the nonprofit and community it serves to do the best job you can."

Promoting an arts organization in Dallas is a very crowded and competitive undertaking. As Carter says, "There are a whole lot of arts organizations competing for the limited amount of 'space' that you find here." Another was the shoestring budget, since Shakespeare Dallas could not afford to contribute anything financially.

Because Carter had an appreciation for the arts and their benefits to the community, he had the interest to overcome challenges. As a board member and later chair, he easily spotted the chink in Shakespeare Dallas's armor: a dearth of PR funds and planning.

"It was a case study in that everything you hope for as a practitioner came to life," says Carter. "You could see the direct impact on attendance, fundraising and marketing activities, and you could connect all the dots and see that PR, in essence, helped to secure and protect the long-term future of this organization."

Measurement can be a tricky topic in conducting pro bono campaigns. Carter occasionally bristles at the suggestion that a PR firm should evaluate its success in terms of how many hits it has generated for a client. He never uses an ad equivalency model, despite the fact that Shakespeare Dallas' hit count did go up tenfold following the campaign. The real success in this case lay in the attendance and visibility and fundraising efforts,

all of which went up measurably. In addition, the company has a debt relief campaign in place, as well as numerous new corporate sponsorships.

Pro bono work is expected in a lot of professions, such as law, a field where pro bono projects are monitored and the hours spent are tracked. “We should hold our profession to the same standard,” Carter says, adding that, “selfishly, it provides benefits in terms of the skills learned, relationships made and opportunities it creates.”

Among the benefits was the chance to give back in a creative way. “In my experience,” he says, “many nonprofits lack an understanding of PR and media relations. That’s an area where they typically don’t invest a lot of time or resources. This was about helping them understand PR and achieve their goals in terms of branding and publicity.”

Beyond the creative outlets and satisfaction of providing a needed service, working on a pro bono arts campaign gave Carter PR a chance to give back and make a commitment to community. This is something Carter feels all PR practitioners owe, as professionals.

With more of an eye to the bottom line, however, pro bono work builds relationships in the community, and builds relationships with reporters. This, in turn, builds the brand of the agency and the PR professionals. In the case of Carter PR, it led to the agency’s being named an overall winner in the Volunteer Center of North Texas’ “Hearts of Hope” award program, which acknowledges outstanding corporate contributions to the arts and community. In addition, the firm earned a Summit Award that recognized the campaign.

Another unexpected benefit for Carter PR was the ability to share an exciting and challenging project with the agency’s younger staff. “What better way could there be to build the skills you need in PR than to get them in on the ground level of an important account?” he asks. “It’s a great way for a young person to cut their teeth on an account that’s important to the agency and to the community.” And finally, he says, working pro bono is “a lot of fun.”

Before diving into the waters of pro bono PR work, however, there are some things to consider. First, says Carter, give “serious thought to the commitment. Don’t make that commitment lightly. If you are drawn to that type of opportunity, serve. But commit as much time and energy and dedication to that as you would to any other program. The rewards you see will be well worth the effort.”

Carter suggests seeking an organization that really needs the value you will provide as a PR professional. Not every agency needs the kind of attention Carter PR gave to Shakespeare Dallas, but, says Carter, “We found a diamond in the rough. This arts organization had done well in the past, but it had opportunity to do better. One of the things that was missing in its ability to be a well-rounded nonprofit was PR. For us, it was a perfect marriage.”

Partnership is key, whether it’s the perfect partnership between agency and client, or the match between client and corporate sponsor. Find an organization that understands PR is an investment, not an expense. Carter PR got buy-in from a board and managers who understood that while the agency would direct PR efforts, it needed their support. “I served on the board for a couple of years before we got involved,” Carter says. “I had always provided some advice and counsel, but it’s one thing to call the plays, and it’s another to help execute them.”

Once they took the job on, because so many people compete for the media space, they had to develop and fashion stories that would play with all the media that covered that community. Carter PR pitched stories about different aspects of Shakespeare Dallas to very different types of media. The company tours inner city schools with a small company of actors, who perform 45-minute productions under a program dubbed “Shakespeare on the Go” for kids who have not had much exposure to the arts, and Carter says it was a natural draw for television, as well as for urban publications.

## FINDING THE RIGHT FIT FOR PRO BONO WORK

For Carter, working for an arts organization was a natural fit because he loved the theater and was already involved with the company. When it is time to search for a pro bono project that will be a good fit for your agency, play to your own passions. “It’s such a huge commitment in terms of time that you have to have a passion for it,” Carter emphasizes. “I’m not sure what we did would have worked with any arts organization.”

He recommends looking at your relationships in the community, trying to understand the nonprofits and the role they serve, whether it’s in the arts, education or another field. You have to know the organization before you begin to manage its public relations. Be a part of the fabric of the community and learn what job the organization

serves, and how it can benefit from improved coverage. Make sure the organization sees PR as an investment and understands that PR is a key function.

Carter says it's not hard to find nonprofits that have an interest in PR, and the best way to start is by reaching out. Find out if they currently work with a PR firm, as well as what their needs and interests are. Then you can say you believe they could benefit from PR and that you are interested in giving back to the community in a different and creative way by assisting them.

The relationships Carter PR formed through its efforts in behalf of Shakespeare Dallas were a benefit they never expected and had not sought. Carter says, simply, that "good things happen for good people. As you are establishing your brand as a new agency, what better way than to do good? You evolve civically."

Carter PR is involved in a new pro bono campaign, this time in an effort to defeat a controversial immigration ordinance that has been adopted in a Dallas suburb. "I'm working with members of the community to lead a petition drive for a vote on the ordinance," he says.

Because of the agency's past work, Carter PR has a template for future efforts in behalf of Shakespeare Dallas. They have identified key reporters and established relationships. "Now we are preparing for our second act," he says. "There are so many 'tier two' arts organizations. We are one of the smaller organizations, the ones with an annual budget of a million dollars or less. There are so many vying for the attention of the news media here. It's competitive, even in the arts field. And you are running a business, even though it's in the arts."

Carter PR has helped lay a foundation for Shakespeare Dallas from which it can now build as an organization. In turn, the company and agency's brands are stronger than ever, and their profile and visibility are as high as they have ever been. The theater group has added a fall season to its annual lineup, and attendance levels are at an all-time high. In addition, it has a new annual corporate sponsor in the form of Allstate Insurance, which came on this fall. Shakespeare Dallas still has some financial hurdles ahead of it, but now it faces less than \$100,000 in debt, where before it was looking at a cool half a million. As a business, it is managing its funds better and has made fiscal management its number one priority.

Says Carter, "We are taking our partnerships and finding new ways to leverage them in support of the organization. We brought polish to the brand, as well as visibility for the image of the organization. It had it before, but for years, the rocket was rumbling on the launch pad. Now, it has taken off." **PRN**

## Commitment to Community

In 2005, Denver-based GroundFloor Media took a desperate phone call that would play to one of its strongest missions: community involvement and pro bono work. Agency founder Laura Love is dedicated to helping out whenever possible, and since starting the agency, has devoted 20% of GFM's work to nonprofit clients and pro-bono accounts.

Like Travis Carter of Carter PR in Dallas, Love is a board member of one of her favorite pro bono clients: the Tennyson Center for Children. In 2005, the Center—which provides a home for more than 500 of Colorado's abused and neglected children—was fighting for its very existence after its parent organization filed for bankruptcy and put the Center's building up for sale. The potential buyer of the building wanted to turn it into a for-profit senior center. The toughest challenge was the time constraint: the sale was set to close in three days from the time of the phone call to GroundFloor Media.

Love's PR team swung into immediate action, seeking coverage in at least one local print outlet and one broadcast news outlet. There were two goals: to position the center as a casualty of an unnecessary real estate transaction (the parent company did not need the money from the sale in order to pay back its creditors), and to use the stories of the children served by the center to illustrate its vital role in the community and the impact its closing would have.

Representatives of the Tennyson Center, as well as some of the children and parents, acted as spokespeople to tell the center's story and solicit support. Interviews were set up with local ABC and CBS affiliates, and the Denver Post and Rocky Mountain News (two of the state's most prominent newspapers) came to the Center to conduct on-site interviews for coverage in their pages.

The team also turned to the power of the Internet to create awareness that would spread virally. More than 900 people logged on to the Center's newly created blog over the three days of the campaign.

The results? When the deadline arrived, the developer found it had not been able to come up with the funds it needed to close on the building, and a friendly bidder was able to step up and buy the Tennyson Center, which is still open and functioning—thanks to the labors of Love and her PR team.



**"Once you find a winning story, keep on pitching it to every city and type of media outlet that's out there."  
—Sue Vitters Howland, VP, Weber Shandwick**





# THE GOLDEN YEARS: IN A GEN Y-FOCUSED AGE OF TALENT MANAGEMENT, ONE COMPANY BEGINS TO MATURE

BY PR NEWS EDITORS

**A**s with many pharmacy retailers, CVS/pharmacy is experiencing a shortage of pharmacists and pharmacy technicians. And, as Baby Boomers continue to hit their 60s and contemplate retirement, there may not be enough young people entering the workforce in the next 10 years to compensate for this deficit. What's more, the Bureau of Labor Statistics recently projected a shortfall of 10 million workers in the U.S. in 2010.

Because of these trends, CVS Caremark (parent owner of CVS/pharmacy) began to launch programs and partnerships designed to recruit, train and retain older workers as part of the company's workforce initiatives. Especially given today's ubiquitous focus on challenges related to reaching younger employees—namely, Gen Yers—this nontraditional talent management effort addresses the needs of a generation that is often overlooked.

“[The program began] as a way for CVS Caremark to further develop a skilled, diverse workforce, while at the same time build stronger communities by employing and training people in the neighborhoods we serve,” explains Steve Wing, director of workforce initiatives, CVS Caremark.

“Workforce initiatives establish win-win partnerships with local, state and federal agencies, nonprofits and faith-based organizations.”

**“Workforce initiatives establish win-win partnerships with local, state and federal agencies, nonprofits and faith-based organizations.”**

**—Steve Wing, director of workforce initiatives, CVS Caremark**

## Good PR Is Viral PR

While working as the director of CVS Caremark's workforce initiatives, Steve Wing learned a valuable lesson: A good national worker trend story can have a powerful cascade effect, which can lead to further positive PR for the program that's being highlighted.

“After we placed our initial stories on CVS Caremark's mature worker initiatives with publications such as The Christian Science Monitor, Time and the Boston Globe, other media outlets began seeing these stories and coming to us to do their own version of the story. In effect, the stories we placed were doing the PR for us,” he says. “We also proactively used the media clips in our pitches to encourage other outlets to do a similar story tailored to their unique audience. We made sure we pitched the coverage to outlets that weren't competitors, such as pitching print stories to broadcast media and trade stories to regional daily newspapers.”

## A MATURE PERSPECTIVE

Currently, the number of CVS' mature workers, age 50 and older, has grown from 6% of all employees in the 1990s to more than 17%, and it is expected to grow even more in the next 10 years.

In 2006, as the first members of the Baby Boomer generation began to surpass age 60, various studies were released that analyzed the value of older employees, while examining their plans to keep working past retirement age. Weber Shandwick, which had begun working with CVS on

this mature worker program in June 2005, homed in on these studies to use as news hooks to interest the media in not only writing about mature worker trends, but also in highlighting CVS/pharmacy as a positive workforce leader at the forefront of these trends.

To help position CVS as a successful, innovative and responsible employer, particularly where older workers were concerned, Weber Shandwick created the following objectives for the workforce initiative targeting seniors:

- Build a positive corporate image among the general public, shareholders, customers and employees;

- Establish CVS as a corporate leader in workforce development;
- Position CVS as an attractive employer to workers age 50-plus;
- Gain exposure for the mature worker initiative and other innovative CVS workforce programs targeting seniors; and,
- Build brand equity for CVS in established markets such as the Northeast and other regions like Florida where the company has grown by acquisition.

To meet these goals and prepare for the following year, the CVS Caremark/Weber Shandwick team holds a three-hour planning meeting each year to set goals, objectives and strategies. Additionally, Weber Shandwick holds biweekly calls with CVS to discuss new programs and review tactics as needed.

## EMPLOYEES AS PROGRAM SPOKESPERSONS

For the program planning and strategy phase, Weber Shandwick developed core messages around CVS' workforce training initiatives to attract and retain mature workers. Instead of relying on celebrity spokespersons, the agency set out to find employees who would be good media candidates to bring these stories to life.

After contacting regional managers to help find mature workers, Weber Shandwick interviewed them to learn their personal histories. Because many employees are not media savvy, the agency had to get them up to speed to "fully understand the value of PR," says Wing. And, to give each story a special nuance, the agency sought to exploit the most compelling angle.

However, while the personal stories of mature employees who personified the message helped elevate this program, there were still inherent challenges—namely, gaining visibility for the CVS Caremark's workforce initiatives with a modest annual budget, and targeting the reporters who would be most interested in these stories. Reaching out to them in multiple markets across the country was instrumental in getting media attention.

To overcome this hurdle, the team leveraged CVS as an AARP Featured Employer (named in November 2005) to tie the CVS stories to a larger workplace trend. Two studies came out in late 2005 that assisted Weber Shandwick. One, AARP's "The Business Case for Workers Age 50 plus," dispelled the fallacy that workers in this age bracket "cost more" than younger workers.

Then there was the Boston College Center on Aging and Work's study, which states that traditional retirement, where employees stop working entirely, may never happen for most Baby Boomers. The report also says that flexible schedules will be key to keeping them working. The communications team used these studies as news hooks to gain reporters' attention.

### Match the Pitch to the Media Contact

For Sue Vitters Howland, VP of Weber Shandwick, attracting the media's attention to your company's innovative HR initiatives may have everything to do with the focus of your pitch.

"Workforce trends tend to have a broad appeal with the media. Reporters who cover business, employment, education, retail, social issues, etc., are all interested in various angles of workforce stories. So if, for example, you don't succeed in piquing the interest of the business reporter, then identify an education angle to the story and pitch the education reporter," she says.

"Additionally, companies often implement workforce initiatives across the organization, and if the company is national, that means you'll be able to provide that ever-important local angle for daily newspaper reporters across the country. Finally, many organizations release significant studies on national workforce topics. The key is to identify the compelling stories and trends that relate to your company's initiative. Once you find a winning story, keep on pitching it to every city and type of media outlet that's out there."

## PITCHING THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

This strategy turned out to be highly effective and, in turn, the return on investment was far-reaching. From January to December 2006 alone, the campaign highlighting CVS/pharmacy's mature worker initiatives generated 38 articles and 36,361,858 media impressions, plus significant online exposure in leading national, regional and trade outlets. During 2006 and 2007, the communications team secured about 200 million impressions, and they are currently working to increase that number for 2009, according to Sue Vitters Howland, VP of Weber Shandwick.



Part-time pharmacist Bill Duclos, 81, helps a customer find cold medicine at a CVS store. Duclos says that the flexibility of CVS/pharmacy's mature worker program is the main reason he has remained working past the traditional retirement age.

newsworthy on its own, but when added to information received from other field staff, it turns into an interesting trade story for the media. During the past several years, my field staff has recognized the value in sending ideas to the agency, and now they regularly send ideas to Weber Shandwick without any prompting."

Also, learning how to craft and execute a PR program on limited funds was another lesson learned. "It is possible to obtain significant top-tier national media coverage on a modest budget—but it takes some creativity," adds Wing. "Weber Shandwick did this by leveraging news hooks and third-party stories to develop broader trend pitches. Trend stories are a great way to obtain coverage with the top-tier national media. When you are the one to introduce the media to a compelling new trend, they will often reward you by making your company the centerpiece of the story." **PRN**

The positive coverage helped CVS/pharmacy to recruit more mature workers on its own and place individuals in positive career paths. CVS/pharmacy also grew its mature worker program from fewer than 300 employees to more than 1,000 in 2006.

"The coverage also helps to show current employees, customers and shareholders the ways in which CVS is a leader in workforce development," says Howland.

For Wing, there were several lessons learned from working on this program.

"In terms of maintaining a dialogue between the agency and our workforce initiatives field teams, we quickly learned that it was helpful to have our agency draft regular e-mails for the field reminding them to send in story ideas," he notes. "Sometimes one tidbit of information isn't





**“With a well-run, speedy, integrated campaign which uses every PR tool in the toolbox, you can succeed.”**

**—Kathy Jeavons, SVP, public affairs, Ketchum**



# TRANSITION OF POWER: MAINTAINING BRAND STRENGTH & CONSUMER CONFIDENCE DURING AN ACQUISITION

BY PR NEWS EDITORS

**P**eriods of transition around mergers and acquisitions present innumerable challenges for organizations, especially when a primary goal is to retain a brand's relevance and prominence in the marketplace.

Such was the dilemma faced by SurfControl, a leading provider of global on-demand, network and endpoint IT security solutions, in early 2007, at which point speculation was running amok in the Silicon Valley pipeline that Websense, a security software company headquartered in San Diego, would be purchasing the company. Sure enough, on April 26, 2007, rumors crystallized into reality when Websense announced a formal offer to acquire its rival. The acquisition would span six months and was officially closed on October 3, 2007.

To foster a strong corporate image and maintain its network of business relationships with customers and partners during the transition, SurfControl partnered with Citigate Cunningham, an agency that specializes in working with Silicon Valley clients, during this period of uncertainty. It helped that SurfControl already had a working relationship with Citigate Cunningham.

"We worked with them a year before the acquisition by Websense," says Melissa Sheridan, executive vice president, Citigate Cunningham. "They came to us and said, 'We want to make sure our customers don't leave us. We need to reassure them that we have leadership and are relevant—sort of we're continuing business as usual.'"

Citigate Cunningham executives recommended that the SurfControl team resume aggressive actions with media and analysts to drive the company's overall objectives during the six months leading up to the closing date. These objectives included:

- Inspiring confidence in the installed base of customers to stimulate renewals;
- Raising SurfControl's profile in the channel communicating that SurfControl was still in the game and was expanding its programs; and,
- Elevating SurfControl's leadership as a company.

After Websense announced its intent to acquire SurfControl, Citigate Cunningham strategically targeted the top influencers that mattered most to the company's customers, partners and the industry at large, including business, technology trade, security-specific and channel press, industry analysts and new media.

## FOCUS ON SUCCESS AND COMMITMENT

To support SurfControl's objectives, Citigate Cunningham developed three major programs:

1. Own the channel press to demonstrate ongoing leadership and commitment to partners;
2. Create a customer success spotlight to stimulate sales and retention;

### Communicating During an Acquisition: Increase Your Profile

To maintain longstanding, fruitful relationships with consumers, advertisers and stakeholders during an acquisition, Citigate Cunningham's executive vice president Melissa Sheridan offers these best practices on how to keep your brand relevant:

- Continue speaking to the media: It's crucial to act as if business is operating as usual. "Have execs hold briefings with editors-in-chief and editorial influencers so that they can be seen as still on scene—still relevant and contributing value to the industry."
- Map out a significant news calendar: Make sure you have a "steady drumbeat of news" to announce to the media. When Sheridan worked on the campaign with SurfControl, she and her colleagues were always reviewing what SurfControl had in the news pipeline in terms of customer wins and partnership announcements.
- Package the brand for industry honors: This is key to generating further attention for the brand. "We submitted a lot of industry awards," says Sheridan. "SurfControl's products were always well-regarded. We wanted to make sure that they would remain the same within the same timeframe."

3. Flesh out the overall leadership platform to boost company morale and industry confidence.

For the channel press program, the tactics Citigate Cunningham developed that would map back to the overall objectives included:

- Placing partner case studies in target channel publications;
- Submitting SurfControl's channel executives for channel-specific awards to raise the company's profile in the channel; and,
- Establishing relationships and strengthening existing bonds with top-tier channel press as well as targeted analysts resulting in high-quality channel coverage.

For the customer success spotlight, Citigate Cunningham focused on placing customer case study placements in top trade and security outlets, and securing speaking opportunities at a major industry event. Finally, for the leadership platform component, Citigate Cunningham set out to the following:

- Secure one-on-one briefings with top-tier business publications;
- Secure in-person and phone briefings with editorial and analyst influencers leading up to the SurfControl Email Filter 6.0 product announcement;
- Target product reviewers around key products and announcement;
- Forge relationships with key bloggers and garner coverage through new media channels such as podcasts;
- Submit SurfControl and executives for prestigious industry awards; and,
- Place a bylined column for the CEO in security-specific outlets.

## PAUSING TO REGAIN COMPOSURE

But not all went smoothly. Initially, SurfControl did not want to speak to the press, says Rosemary Wilson, senior account manager at Citigate Cunningham. This "dark period" began in February 2007, when speculation that Websense may acquire SurfControl was burning up the Silicon Valley grapevine. When Websense did announce its intent to acquire SurfControl in April 2007, the silence ended.

"They were ready to resurface visibility again and start talking to the press," Wilson says. "They wanted to create and direct clear messaging that they were there for customers and SurfControl had maintained their strong control."

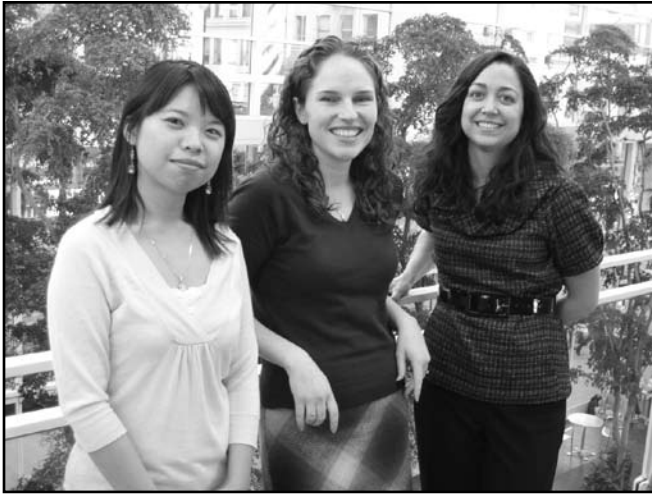
However, the acquisition, coupled with the "dark period," made SurfControl feel apprehensive and anxious about openly engaging with the media in the wake of the Websense news developments. To allay their nerves, the Citigate Cunningham team canceled a few early meetings to carefully coach SurfControl execs in the art of media relations—a decision that doesn't always come easily when reporters come calling. But it served the team well; when this phase was finished, the team switched gears and ramped up communications efforts immediately "without having a lot of momentum behind it."

Yet as with the case of most corporate takeovers, the team had to deal with organizational shifts at the top of the SurfControl leadership, which included a few VIPs—though the CEO remained.

## Maintain Media Relationships

For the Citigate Cunningham team that worked on keeping the SurfControl brand relevant and alive during its acquisition by Websense, there were several key lessons learned, much of which had to do with being media-friendly while knowing how to artfully deflect certain issues. Following are four major points:

- Being a go-to resource for the press on issues (the impact of social networking on enterprise IT security, sudden shifts in malware, etc.) is always a good way to generate buzz.
- A survey on a timely, compelling issue can be a great way to garner high-profile coverage while turning attention away from unwanted speculation or a controversial issue. (For example, SurfControl commissioned a survey on Trust & Risk in the Workplace and leveraged the data to secure top tier, positive coverage in publications like Investor's Business Daily.)
- A key strategy is having from day one solid media and analyst relationships in place, so that influencers have the context on the company's strategy. This helps when you hit a bumpy patch.
- Leveraging third-party advocates such as partners and customers as spokespeople really lends credibility to the company's relevance.



Citigate Cunningham's SurfControl team. Pictured (left to right) Candice Huang, Rosemary Wilson and Melissa Sheridan.

The leadership vacuum “did create a challenge,” notes Sheridan. “We went in and had to start with ground zero and build relationships with [the new execs] and say, ‘This is what we did in the past and this is how we can accomplish that.’” Fortunately, the new execs had confidence in the agency.

“We were able to get results that mapped back to the communications strategy that we recommended,” Wilson says.

### SUCCESSFUL SUCCESSION

Citigate Cunningham's efforts to keep the SurfControl brand relevant during the period of acquisition were a resounding success.

“The agency never failed to accommodate a request,” says Michelle Fleschute, former PR manager at SurfControl. “They provided and successfully

executed on strategic campaigns and programs that elevated SurfControl during our acquisition. Citigate Cunningham's deep industry expertise, creative ideas and flawless execution turned the acquisition period into a time of success for the company, which helped make SurfControl a legacy in the industry.” **PRN**