



CAMPAIGNS: Product PR - BSMG chips away at wood mistruths

Written by **CRAIG MCGUIRE**

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Client: Wood Promotion Network (Toronto)

PR Team: BSMG (Chicago)

Campaign: Be Constructive

Time Frame: September 2000 - ongoing

Budget: dollars 45 million (three-year contract)

Late last year, BSMG signed on to help educate the North American public about the wonderful world of wood.

Talk about a PR challenge. But surprisingly, the campaign was not nearly as stiff as you would imagine.

Concerned that competing industries are fueling misconceptions about wood, the Wood Promotion Network (WPN), which represents all facets of the wood industry, from forestry companies to processors, suppliers, dealers and national retailers, decided to strike back.

Strategy

The strong, silent type, wood has always been its own best advocate.

When more than 90% of North American homes are framed with wood, how much PR exposure is really needed?

'Wood's story - strength, affordability, durability, flexibility and environmental superiority - has been told through endorsements by professionals and consumers that use it,' explains BSMG's Jerry Gleason.

'But recently, competitive industries have leveraged misperceptions to

gain share in the residential construction market,' he continues. 'WPN's charge is to dispel the myths and trumpet wood's superiority as a building material.'

WPN and BSMG crafted an information campaign focusing on key facts: wood is as safe, sturdy and dependable a building material as any other; it is the best insulator against heat and cold; it is the most affordable building material around; and North American forests are not decreasing.

Tactics

The campaign launched last fall with the opening of The Wood Information Bureau, a media resource for wood facts, information and industry news.

Tim Carter, who writes the nationally syndicated 'Ask The Builder' column, agreed to conduct a national satellite media tour, which included a string of Home Depot in-store clinics, interviews with local newspapers and appearances on local TV stations.

As the holidays approached, the agency devised a mini-campaign, featuring toy and child development expert Marianne Symanski, to draw attention to the benefits of wooden toys for gift-giving. WPN also partnered with the National Christmas Tree Association in the first-ever National Christmas Tree-Cycling Week.

Other tactics included an appearance at the International Builders' Show and an SMT featuring author and Today show correspondent Lou Manfredini (a.k.a. Ourhouse.com's 'Mr. Fix-it').

A 'Be Constructive'team participated in 'Homes for Hopeful Hounds,' a project to build doghouses for an Atlanta animal shelter.

Results

WPN has garnered significant media attention, the biggest exposure coming from an article in the February 9 issue of The Wall Street Journal.

Stories also ran in the Canadian newspaper National Post, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Chicago Sun-Times, as well as in trade publications such as Builder, National Home Center News and The Journal of Light Construction.

Guerrilla efforts at the Builders' Show led to coverage on all four Atlanta affiliates. And there were more than 56 SMT hits featuring Tim Carter, including a live, in-studio interview and a construction

demonstration on Canada AM, the largest national morning show in Canada.

Future

Still lumbering along in its first year, the deep-pocketed WPN plans to 'be constructive' for at least another two years - knock on wood.