



CAMPAIGNS: Product Launch - Trim 'N' Vac really cleans up Sturgis

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Client: Wahl Clipper (Sterling, IL)
PR Team: Hill & Knowlton (Chicago)
Campaign: "Finally a Beard Trimmer for Women!"
Time Frame: August 2001
Budget: Approximately \$20,000 - \$25,000

The Wahl Clipper Corporation wasn't exactly targeting the elusive hairy women demographic when it came up with the catch line "Finally a Beard Trimmer for Women!" Though the slogan does require a little explanation.

"While men actually use the Trim 'N' Vac, both men and women appreciate it because it delivers a neat trim and leaves a cleaner sink, virtually free of whiskers," explains Patrick Sandusky, senior account supervisor at Hill & Knowlton.

Strategy

The clever slogan was at the heart of a campaign commissioned by Wahl Clipper to raise awareness and drive sales in advance of the summer release of its Trim 'N' Vac, the first and only vacuuming beard and mustache trimmer. "We knew our campaign geared toward women was on target," says Pat Anello, Wahl Clipper director of marketing, but the head-turning slogan wasn't the only direction strategists considered.

"Other ideas included having a traveling 'white glove' testing by the public to see the results of a cleaner sink from using the Trim 'N' Vac," says Sandusky. "We also thought of creating a Trim 'N' Vac character to personify the new product," he adds.

In the end, it was decided that the product itself and its unique attributes needed to be at the center of the strategy.

Tactics

Knowing that a clever slogan can only get you so far, Wahl Clipper needed a big splash event to attract media attention.

"We chose to launch at the Sturgis (SD) Motorcycle Rally because it

offered the opportunity to reach our target demographic, namely men with disposable income who sport facial hair," says Sandusky. In advance of the event, H&K pre-briefed select media outlets to build momentum, including local and national media, as well as biker trades. "We stood at the street corner with signs to drive traffic to the booth, and we registered at the media tent to invite reporters covering Sturgis to try out the product," says Sandusky. Interested Sturgis attendees were invited into Wahl Clipper's demo tent to test and purchase the product, as well as receive complimentary items such as manicure sets and combs.

However, Sturgis wasn't the only marketing opportunity H&K saw. "We saw Al Gore's new beard," explains Sandusky, "and sent him a Trim 'N' Vac."

Results

The campaign received significant print and broadcast coverage, including segments on NBC and FOX news programs. Wahl's efforts were also profiled in Jim Kirk's nationally syndicated Chicago Tribune column "On Marketing, etc." and again in the Tribune's "Inc." column. WBBM-FM radio (Chicago's CBS affiliate), Time Digital, The Charlotte Observer, the Austin-American Statesman, ON magazine, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and The Tennessean were among several others to pick up the story.

But while media coverage was important, Wahl Clipper isn't in the business of selling newspapers. As a result of the campaign, Wahl Clipper received orders for the Trim 'N' Vac from Sears' national buyer, and sold out of its entire Trim 'N' Vac supply at Sturgis.

Future

"For the rest of this year, we have planned heavy PR outreach around the holidays, which will coordinate with ad placements in select trades," says Sandusky. "We will highlight the Trim 'N' Vac as the new 'neat' gadget for the holidays, a great gift idea, and something to keep your house clean when relatives arrive."