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Cast of clients backs film festival

Craig McGuire - 12 Jun 2006 11:01

Not every film festival can be as prominent as Cannes. But the festivals that find success usually do so by carving out a distinct niche in the film community.

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For its 2006 debut, the Delray Beach Film Festival aspired to be the festival for the filmmakers. To become so, it needed the pro-bono PR firepower of TransMedia Group, a Boca Raton, FL, agency that cast several of its other clients in supporting roles to help drum up some buzz.

"Even though it would take up a lot of staff time, the agency decided to sign the account pro bono with the mindset of implementing a strategy to make the film festival benefit some of its other clients," says TransMedia account executive Kelli Bloechinger.

Strategy

The Delray Beach Film Festival did not have a Sundance-sized PR budget. TransMedia recognized the potential to not only expose the film festival to the local community and to filmmakers across the country, but also provide a platform for its other clients to get high-profile exposure.

"To support any of the arts today, PR firms must find imaginative ways to involve sponsors and clients so it's a win-win for everyone," says Tom Madden, CEO of TransMedia Group.

Through specialty awards and films the firm established synergy amongst the film festival and three of its other clients.

Tactics

For client B & P Co., maker of wrinkle-smoothing Frownies Facial Pads, Madden created the Frownie Award for the best close-up of an actress in an independent film. The Frownie Award was presented by Jim Wright, great-grandson of B & P's founder, to actress Kashmira Shah (pictured right) for the film *My Bollywood Bride.*

Next, TransMedia created the PurpleTrunk Award for best documentary film, presented by PurpleTrunk cofounder Renee Bacherman. PurpleTrunk is an online art gallery of one-of-a-kind works.

Finally, the firm turned a recently created VNR into a short documentary. *Turning Point: A Woman's Race to Self Discovery* featured another TransMedia client, single mom/ race car driver/pastry chef Mary Katherine.

Armed with these distinct components and a wide array of collaterals, an online presence was created, including a festival blog, and a media outreach campaign blanketing South Florida.

Results

"TransMedia has generated remarkable media placements with a variety of marketing and branding opportunities for us," says Kathy Wright, B & P's CEO.

Coverage ran in the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel, Palm Beach Post, Delray Beach News, Delray Times, and Boca Raton News*, and the festival was *Delray Beach Magazine*'s March cover story.

The Frownie Award received exposure in America and India, Shah's home, which has prompted B & P to explore different distribution channels in India.

The PurpleTrunk Award gained media exposure, and the company capitalized by selling the "Best of Films" from the festival.

Also, a local sports reporter approached Katherine about racing him for a TV news segment.

Future

The Delray Beach Film Festival has re-signed TransMedia and begun planning the 2007 festival.

In addition, both awards have received strong interest to be presented at other film festivals.

"We have interest from the Palm Springs International Film Festival, the Newport Beach Film Festival, and Lunafest, as well as others that it is too early in negotiations to mention," Bloechinger says.

PR team: Delray Beach Film Festival with festival director Michael Posner (Delray Beach, FL) and TransMedia Group (Boca Raton, FL)

Campaign: Delray Beach Film Festival

Duration: September 1, 2005, to April 1, 2006

Budget: Pro bono (expenses: $20,000)

***PRWeek*'s view**

The smart thing about this campaign was that even though TransMedia took on the film festival pro bono, it maximized every opportunity to work other clients into the mix. While mixing and matching clients is not always a good idea, TransMedia demonstrated that it can be done successfully without any one client being overshadowed.

TransMedia not only gained what will be a long-term client, but also gave three other clients a creative platform to promote themselves and their products.

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