



CAMPAIGNS: Product PR - Hair-care client scores with Joe

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Client: Just For Men Haircolor (White Plains, NY)

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PR Team: Ketchum (Pittsburgh, PA)

Campaign: Top of Your Game Time Frame: July - early November 2000

Budget: dollars 750,000-800,000

When rolling out a new formula for its Just For Men Haircolor, parent company Combe wanted to spread its PR dollars around to reach high-end, high-maintenance male consumers as well as everyday Joes.

The Joe they landed as celebrity spokesman, however, turned out to be anything but everyday. Live in the ESPN Zone in New York's Times Square on July 25, Joe Theismann, who quarterbacked the NFL's Washington Redskins to victory in Super Bowl XVII, publicly colored his graying locks. The highly publicized stunt kicked off Just For Men Haircolor's Top of Your Game campaign.

Strategy

The market for men's hair-coloring products has nearly tripled since 1995. 'Today's image-focused society caused the men's home hair-color category to become a dollars 113.5 million industry in 1999, and it is expected to climb higher,' predicts Dominic DeMain, SVP of US marketing at Combe.

Combe allocated a healthy budget for PR and marketing and drafted Ketchum to publicize the new formula of its flagship brand. Ketchum focused on three main objectives: generate publicity, drive product trial and give men 'permission' to color their gray.

'To achieve these objectives,' says Ketchum account exec Allison Costello, 'we decided to concentrate on something men love - football.'

Adding more firepower to the campaign, the Theismann stunt kicked off the Top of Your Game contest, which offered an all-expense-paid trip for two to Jamaica. For every man who entered the contest, Combe pledged to donate one dollar to the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Theismann's favorite charity.

Leading up to the launch, Combe commissioned Ketchum to poll 306 men ages 18-65.

The survey found that men think they look younger without gray hair, which generated insightful sound bites like, 'People treat you better if you look younger.'

Press releases focused on the contest, the charitable donations and the kick-off event, where Theismann openly addressed the issue of male vanity.

Tactics

Combe designed an integrated PR and marketing program that included new product packaging, TV and print ads as well as point-of-purchase displays.

The high-profile PR push included the consumer contest, charity tie-in, media events and the recruitment of Theismann through Westport Entertainment.

Still in the public eye as an ESPN analyst and professional speaker, Theismann says he signed on for the makeover partly because of the urging of his wife and his mother - a disarmingly touching element leveraged in the press releases.

Ketchum's national media relations plan first focused on publicizing the kickoff event. Press releases were sent to mainstream national publications.

A satellite media tour was then conducted, followed by a radio tour starting July 31.

Radio news releases were distributed, and three local tailgating market events were scheduled in the parking lots of NFL stadiums in Pittsburgh, Atlanta and Phoenix prior to football games, giving regular Joes the chance to color their gray hair for charity. For each person who colored his hair at the events Combe donated dollars 100 to St. Jude; for each celebrity who colored his hair at any of the events, dollars 1,000 was donated to St. Jude.

Results

As a result of the tailgating events, Just For Men Haircolor raised almost dollars 10,000 for the hospital. This campaign received a great deal of positive media coverage, generating more than 73 million impressions, says Ketchum's Costello. Coverage included interviews with Theismann on Live! With Regis, Fox and Friends and placements in USA Today, The New York Post, The Boston Herald and Maxim Online.

The company said sales numbers for the product were unavailable.