



Kitchen Public Relations, LLC

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2008 GOLD BULLDOG AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN MEDIA RELATIONS

Category: Best Health, Medicine & Fitness Campaign

Agency: Kitchen Public Relations, LLC

LOSE WEIGHT, EARN MONEY

Background

Tangerine Wellness offers a corporate sponsored, fully outsourced weight loss and management solution that directly rewards employees for losing weight and for maintaining a healthy weight. Through its customized weight management program, Tangerine helps employees feel better and maintain a healthier lifestyle, while at the same time, helps companies increase productivity and save money on their healthcare costs.

When Kitchen Public Relations (KPR) was first approached in late 2006 by Tangerine's founder and Chief Executive Officer, Aaron Day, for assistance in developing and implementing a public relations program, the company had exactly one client. Needless to say, in addition to launching the service and beginning to brand the company, a significant part of our efforts was to focus on creating more business opportunities for Tangerine in the marketplace.

The Challenges

As a start-up company, Tangerine Wellness was not only virtually unknown to the media, it was largely unknown in the corporate world in which it wanted to generate business. In addition, the company was operating with a very limited marketing and public relations budget to generate exposure and visibility.

What little was known about Tangerine by the press or the general public at the onset of our campaign was perhaps limited to the impression that Tangerine was essentially a "healthcare wellness" company devoted to reducing the incidences of obesity, which has reached epidemic proportions in this country. We knew from the outset that presenting Tangerine to the media as just another health-

care play was not going to generate the kind of publicity it needed to quickly generate new business leads because this approach was not going to reach its target audience.

It was also going to be a great challenge promoting a company with a single client and no track record of success. We knew that in order for the company to achieve long-term viability, it would have to generate leads, and do it very quickly.

In other words, publicity for the sake of publicity was not going to be enough. Our challenge was to use media relations to achieve measurable results for our client in terms of immediate leads and sales generation.

The Strategy and Tactics

We reached the critical insight that in order to succeed with the media and create the kind of attention Tangerine would need to reach its targeted audiences, we would brand Tangerine as a potential client's business partner, one that understood how rising healthcare costs and decreasing worker productivity were hurting many companies where it truly mattered, the bottom line.

Rather than reach out to reporters who cover the healthcare beat (again, because we would not be reaching key decision-makers), we knew that we would be most successful concentrating our efforts on outreach to the workplace press, and we made the strategic decision to pursue that course of action. In fact, we made several discrete phone calls to key workplace reporters confirming what we thought. While certainly Tangerine's programs had tremendous healthcare benefits, we knew the press would be much more interested in covering the financial benefits of how Tangerine would help reduce the cost of healthcare and make companies more productive and efficient. And, we knew that potential decision-makers, including HR personnel, CFO's, COO's, etc. would be more likely to be swayed by this approach.

Rather than go for broke immediately, since the company was relatively unknown, we decided to take an incremental approach to the media. Again, how were we to make a major splash with only one client to highlight as a case study of Tangerine's expertise? We knew from past experience that there are often times when a company is simply not willing to talk to the media about a service an outside entity is providing. Fortunately, this was not the case with Tangerine's first client, which was more than willing to publicly "evangelize" about the weight loss program that Tangerine had developed and was implementing on its behalf.

Rockford Acromatic, a manufacturer in Rockford, Illinois, was thrilled to be an active participant in the PR efforts promoting Tangerine. After all, it would give them publicity and at the same time, validate everything that Tangerine was doing for them.

The Results and Measurement

The first placement we secured for Tangerine was in the local Rockford daily newspaper, the *Rockford Register-Star*. A very small step, but one which led to more local press and appointments for Aaron Day with a few other local companies who had seen the positive press coverage about the results Tangerine was achieving for Rockford Acromatic. Over the next few months, Tangerine was able to sign on a number of other clients. This helped our PR efforts on a more national level and led to a series of high-level placements during one week in March of 2007. In rapid succession, Tangerine was featured on *Good Morning America*, *Fox and Friends*, and in the *Wall Street Journal*.

Another very important placement in *Employee Benefit News* soon followed. While Tangerine was receiving national publicity, we knew that placement in an industry trade publication would also have a great impact, particularly in one of the most prestigious publications covering the employee benefits industry. The article described how Tangerine was able to save Rockford Acromatic ten percent on their annual healthcare costs. Most importantly, the thousands of HR and benefits decision-makers who represent our client's targeted audience read it. In this instance, a company that was all set to go with a competitor to develop its wellness program read the article, contacted Aaron Day and decided instead to sign-up with Tangerine — a great example of the direct impact that media relations can have in creating sales.

The high point of our efforts thus far on behalf of Tangerine Wellness was reached when we learned that ***NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams*** was working on a story about the rising costs of healthcare for employers. The story was going to focus on the issue of incentives versus punishment to motivate employees to lead healthier lives, and which approach was better. It was the perfect scenario since our key message was how Tangerine's positive incentive program reduced healthcare costs and kept employees feeling healthier and more productive.

We quickly pitched Tangerine and offered another one of its clients, Wesley Willows, an assisted living facility, as a case study of a successful rewards program that Tangerine initiated for them. The result? At the risk of sounding immodest, it's called a home run in baseball parlance, as the story reached more than 8,500,000 viewers.

The NBC report showed how Tangerine's program has worked successfully for Wesley Willows, helping it achieve a combined weight loss of 690 pounds and a 19 percent reduction in healthcare claims in just six months.

By discussing the benefits of providing incentives to employees to lose weight and take better care of themselves, the NBC story reinforced the ideal marketing message that Tangerine wanted to convey to prospective clients.

The impact? It was one of those perfect instances where national exposure for Tangerine led directly to new business opportunities, exceeding our client's wildest expectations. Within hours of the broadcast, Tangerine received literally hundreds of business leads and requests for proposals, with several being converted into significant sales.

The results of the campaign have shown that despite being a young company with a very limited budget for media outreach, Tangerine could garner significant national media attention in a short time period, especially with the assistance of committed customer evangelists willing to provide compelling testimonials. Most important, were the direct business results the PR program generated for Tangerine.

According to CEO Aaron Day, Tangerine has generated more than 500 requests for proposal (from zero requests) since the PR program began. In tracking these requests on its website and through its channel partners (which ask specifically how they first heard about Tangerine), more than 50 percent came directly as a result of media relations.

Taking it a step further, the conversion rate (from RFP to new client) is typically about 5 percent. Tangerine's conversion rate is now 15 percent, and again, Mr. Day attributes much of this to the positive press that describes the financial benefits of Tangerine's program. Finally, a typical sales cycle is 120-150 days. Using top media placements as marketing materials to help close its deals, Tangerine has reduced this cycle to an average of 50 days.

It's no wonder that Mr. Day has described the media relations results as "our single best and primary selling tool." Now that's media relations that generates great business results.

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