

Launching a Lasting Image: Sprint PCS

Overview

Sprint PCS retained Cookerly Public Relations to provide a full scope of public relations services to the launch of the company's service in metro Atlanta. The agency was charged with establishing an ongoing series of programs and business relationships that could eventually be assumed by an in-house communications group.

Objectives

Cookerly Public Relations was charged with development of a comprehensive campaign to gain and manage local media exposure for Sprint PCS, secure opportunities for the company to tie into local business and civic organizations, obtain sponsorships and create media events surrounding the launch of service.

Strategy & Tactics

Because the Atlanta wireless market was deeply entrenched by many established competitors, Cookerly Public Relations developed a comprehensive marketing plan for Sprint PCS that would be implemented well before service launch and extend three months beyond. The plan encompassed opportunities to align with business and civic organizations, event and venue sponsorships, promotional activities, media pitch plans, creation of community tie-ins, launch events for retail stores and an overall launch event that would tie Sprint into the community – featuring a launch of environmentally safe balloons at Centennial Place Elementary School.

The agency fostered alliances or memberships in prominent business and civic organizations to bolster the company's presence and help drive ongoing sales. Cookerly also secured sponsorships of local events such as the Atlanta Home Show and venues such as Lakewood Amphitheater.

Results

Serving as the official service launch for Sprint and the announcement of its educational partnership with the school, Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell joined 600 students and staff members to launch balloons into the sky. Each balloon had a return reply card attached detailing Sprint's commitment to education and a request that the finder return the card for tracking purposes.

Tremendous coverage by local television news, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and community newspapers resulted. Additional coverage was obtained by reporting the progress of the balloons, which landed in three states and were found as far away as 170 miles.

Over the length of the campaign, Sprint PCS received significant news coverage of its service launch in metro Atlanta from the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, many community newspapers, television network affiliates and radio stations. The agency also created an aerial banner that continued to serve as a prominent attention-getting icon at major sporting and social events



Highlights

Launch of environmentally safe balloons resulted in tremendous coverage by local television news, the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and community newspapers.

Memberships and speaking opportunities at metro-area Chambers of Commerce secured ties to local business and civic organizations.

An aerial banner serves as a constant reminder of Sprint's community presence.