



Perception is the Reality we manage™

Firm: PR~Link Public Relations®
 Client: Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division
 Entry: VH1 Save The Music Community Outreach Campaign
 Categories: Best Campaign Under \$10,000, Best Education/Public Service Campaign

Summary

Since its inception in 1997, the VH1 Save the Music Foundation has provided more than \$40 million worth of new musical instruments to restore instrumental music programs in more than 1,500 public schools in 80 cities, affecting the lives of 1 million children.

Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division has been partnering with VH1 Save The Music Foundation since 1999 to provide \$975,000 worth of musical instruments to restore music programs in 39 schools in the Greater Cincinnati area. However, there had been no previous media coverage of the donations and celebration concerts. In 2007, 12 Cincinnati Public Schools were set to receive a total donation of \$300,000 from Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division and VH1 Save The Music Foundation. Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division had recently signed PR~Link Public Relations as its agency of record for 2007. PR~Link Public Relations created a carefully messaged, targeted media outreach campaign to gain media coverage and community awareness of the ongoing partnership. The outreach resulted in 15 media stories and more than 4.1 million impressions in the Cincinnati, Ohio, market.

Research

The Journal of Neurological Research published a study in 1997 which showed that: "Music training causes long-term enhancement of preschool children's spatial-temporal reasoning." Previous findings also showed that college students had enhanced short-term spatial-temporal reasoning after listening to a Mozart sonata. This led researchers to believe that music can prime regions of the cortex; and that long-term musical training results in lasting enhancements of neural circuitry. Additional research shows that students who participate in instrumental music programs score higher on standardized tests and are more interested in school and continuing their education. A 2003 Gallup Poll found that 93% of Americans feel schools should offer music as part of the regular curriculum; unfortunately budget cuts have placed many public school music programs in danger.

PR~Link Public Relations conducted primary research in the form of a communications audit of previous materials used to promote the Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division and VH1 Save The Music Foundation donation program. PR~Link Public Relations reviewed photographs and media materials from previous years as well as coverage in other markets. We reviewed the headlines, content and what messaging had stickiness in other markets. We discussed the poor media results from previous years with Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division and how we might approach this year's program differently.

PR~Link then conducted primary research by examining local media archives for similar stories and programs to analyze the types of coverage that we could realistically expect, along with researching the most appropriate reporters and editors to pitch the program to.

Finally, PR~Link conducted a content analysis of current 2007 media materials and key messages. We determined that the materials and messages needed to be strengthened and clarified.

Planning

PR~Link identified the need for stronger messages and media materials and a carefully targeted media outreach. We gathered information on the 12 Cincinnati Public Schools that were receiving the donation. Through conference calls between PR~Link, Time Warner Cable and VH1 Save The Music Foundation, we gathered information and refined messaging and materials. The content analysis results enabled us to develop stronger key messages and visuals. A particularly unique image was the donation check from Time Warner Cable and VH1 Save The Music Foundation. Instead of a standard check, it was the shape of an oversized bass drum with the \$300,000 donation and logos of Time Warner Cable and VH1 Save The Music Foundation prominently featured.

Goal:

Increase community and media awareness of the Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division partnership with VH1 Save The Music Foundation donation of musical instruments to Cincinnati Public Schools, which was entering its tenth year. The previous year, the program received no coverage in Cincinnati.

Objective:

To place a minimum of three stories in the Cincinnati media about Time Warner Cable Southwest Ohio Division and VH1 Save The Music Foundation donation of musical instruments to Cincinnati Public Schools, with at least one placement being a television story, during the week of the campaign.

Execution

Tactics:

1. Strengthen key messages, including the benefits of music education for all children and the commitment of Time Warner Cable and VH1 Save The Music Foundation to make sure that all school children received the benefits of music education.
2. Emphasize the visual elements of the story, including the donation check in the form of an oversized drum, and the school children playing the donated instruments at the celebration concert.
3. Media Kit: Developed media kit including: news release, media advisory and past event photographs, fact sheets and booklets on the benefits of music education from both the standpoint of neurological development and also keeping children engaged and in school.
4. Media Outreach: Outreach to media targets of local TV morning shows, local TV daytime assignment editors and music and education reporters at local daily papers.
5. Still Photography: Professional photographer shot high-resolution digital photos of the event for post event media outreach as well as 2008 media outreach.
6. Post Event Media Outreach: E-mailed high-resolution digital photos from event to local daily papers and posted story and photographs to Cincinnati.com Get Published in the local section under the neighborhoods for each school receiving a donation.

Timeline:

The program had a very compressed timeline. Work began on the project on April 10, 2007. Media materials and messages were developed by April 13, 2007. Media outreach occurred April 16 through April 24, 2007. The celebration concert was on April 24, 2007, and post-event outreach occurred on April 25, 2007.

Budget:

The budget was \$5,000. The campaign was completed under budget at \$4,838.

Evaluation

The campaign occurred on a tight timeline and a small budget of \$5,000. The campaign was completed on time and under budget at \$4,838. The objective of three media placements was surpassed by five

times or 600 percent over the goal of three placements, with the end result of 15 media placements and more than 14.1 million impressions. These results were exceptional and atypical for the Cincinnati market, where the media normally only run a story once and only if a competitor is not running the story. All key messages were included in the stories. The Time Warner Cable and VH1 spokespersons were each interviewed numerous times. Their interviews were included in multiple broadcast reports.

"Our efforts to restore music education in Cincinnati in partnership with Time Warner Cable and Cincinnati Public Schools were brought into the spotlight this year thanks to the efforts of PR~Link. The media push was a significant help in highlighting the importance of music education in every school for every student," said Rob Davidson, program manager for VH1 Save The Music Foundation.

Results

Placements included:

- 1 print
- 1 online
- 13 television

Media Outlet	Number of Impressions
Cincinnati Enquirer	440,000
Cincinnati.com	3,100,000
64 WSTR Local 12 News at 10:00	29,000
12 WKRC Good Morning Cincinnati at 5:00	31,665
5 WLWT News 5 Today at 5:00	22,558
12 WKRC Good Morning Cincinnati at 5:30	31,665
5 WLWT News 5 Today at 6:00	38,390
9 WCPO Good Morning Tri-State	36,335
12 WKRC Good Morning Cincinnati at 7:00	31,883
12 WKRC Local 12 News At 5:00	77,632
9 WCPO 9 News At 5:30	109,489
5 WLWT News 5 At 5:30	40,450
19 WXIX Ten O'Clock News	88,042
19 WXIX Fox19 Morning News At 4:30	10,318
19 WXIX Fox19 Morning News At Five	24,432
Total Impressions	4,111,859