

Category 4b: Special Events and Observances (Seven Days or More) – Budget \$15,001 or more

Title of Entry: #GetNerdyPHL – The 2014 Philadelphia Science Festival [April 25-May 3, 2014]

Organization Submitting: Devine + Partners

Description

To build regional awareness of and drive attendance to the Philadelphia Science Festival, Devine + Partners launched a traditional and social media relations campaign, oversaw a Guinness World Record attempt and managed a 50+ PR Partners coalition resulting in robust media coverage and social media activity, and 20% attendance increase.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

The Situation: As one of Philadelphia's most renowned institutions, The Franklin Institute is an innovative leader in science and technology education, and Pennsylvania's most-visited museum. Located in the heart of Philadelphia's Parkway Museums District, it has long been a cultural attraction in the Philadelphia region, impassioned to ignite in its visitors a lifelong love for science through hands-on discovery.

The Franklin Institute sought to promote its fourth annual Philadelphia Science Festival, a nine-day, city-wide celebration of science and technology in everyday places – parks, libraries, bars, restaurants – that aims to inspire adults and children alike to explore the science of the world around them through hands-on science experiments, lectures, performances and day-long street fairs. In total there were more than 100 events and 175 participating partner organizations.

Given the uniqueness of the Philadelphia Science Festival – one of the first festivals of its kind in the nation – The Franklin Institute was dismayed that Philadelphia market media coverage in previous years was relatively low, and social media activity was average at best. That's when Devine + Partners (D+P) was brought on board.

Objectives:

- Build strong regional awareness for the 2014 Philadelphia Science Festival
- Position The Franklin Institute as a leader in science education in the region
- Drive attendance to Philadelphia Science Festival free and ticketed events.

Target Audiences:

- Young adults (ages 20-40)
- Families – more specifically, families with young children
- Regional schools, specifically students K-7

Planning:

In the months prior to the Philadelphia Science Festival, planning occurred in four major areas:

Activation of PR Partners Coalition: More than 175 partners contributed to the Philadelphia Science Festival – venues, food vendors, museums, local farms, tourism departments – many of which had their own in-house communications teams. D+P leveraged relationships with these partnering communications teams to create a PR Partners Coalition cross-promoting smaller, individual Science Festival events, and heavily promoting Festival 'anchor events.' D+P arranged two networking events for the PR Partners Coalition, helping establish a sense of unity between all parties. Additionally, D+P provided the PR Partners Coalition with a communications guide for assistance in delivering key messaging, and supplied prescribed social media posts to encourage activity on Facebook and Twitter. Finally, the PR Partners Coalition launched a social media campaign compelling its followers to vote for the Philadelphia Science Festival as *Philadelphia Magazine's* "Best of Philly" Award for Best Event. Working together and led by D+P, the PR Partners Coalition proved a major success of the overall Science Festival campaign, ensuring that the Festival's key messaging was communicated clearly and effectively across multiple platforms and that conversations about the Festival continuously happened on and offline.

Overseeing a Guinness World Record Attempt: D+P coordinated a Guinness World Record attempt at the kick-off of the Science Festival to generate media attention about the Festival and serve as a media milestone. The official announcement was held at a press conference in early March where Drexel Engineering students attempted a Guinness World Record for the largest Rube Goldberg machine – picture it as a life-sized version of the classic board game Mouse Trap. D+P devised the attempt, managed media relations and generated social media 'buzz,' and worked closely with Drexel's College of Engineering to ensure that they adhered strictly to Guinness World Record guidelines.

Creating and Implementing a Strategic Social Media Campaign: To raise awareness of the Philadelphia Science Festival, Devine + Partners devised and implemented a multi-platform social media strategy across Facebook,

Twitter and Instagram. Prior to D+P's involvement, the Festival had established social media profiles which the departing PR firm claimed ownership over, resulting in the need to "start from scratch" and build new profiles on Twitter and Instagram. Regardless of this hurdle, D+P's efforts to promote the Festival through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram campaigns that included giveaways, and a strong push for the public to vote for the Festival as Philadelphia Magazine's "Best Event" award, resulted in a 20% increase in likes on Facebook, a 700% increase in Twitter followers and a 180% increase in Instagram followers. The creation of the hashtag #GetNerdyPHL proved incredibly catchy, with media blogger Lydia Yang quoted as saying "Best hashtag ever" and also appearing as the cover headline on the front of the Metro newspaper. The hashtag was subsequently used in all social media posts, press materials and marketing materials, and appeared in numerous media outlets.

Everyone Is a Scientist: Devine + Partners approached the media relations campaign for the Philadelphia Science Festival by breaking down the various Festival events into multiple categories (food, sports, etc.), and identified opportunities to engage reporters of a variety of beats in order to secure coverage in sections of the newspaper other than the "Science" page. D+P worked hand-in-hand with reporters from beats including: music, environment, sports, family interest, health, technology, fashion, beer, education, and art. The result was a barrage of coverage spanning broadcast, print, online, social media and radio. Total media impressions were over 65,000,000.

EXECUTION/TACTICS

Over the three month [January-March 2014] pre-festival phase, D+P developed key messaging to be utilized in written materials, speaking engagements and media interviews; wrote all necessary media materials and media advisories; and developed a series of interesting story angles for the media. D+P leveraged the different pitch angles to generate advanced media coverage leading up to the Science Festival, and held a pre-festival event [Guinness World Record attempt] for the press to cover, providing a milestone for the media to discuss the Science Festival in advance.

Additionally, D+P promoted the hashtag #GetNerdyPHL for the Festival and began promoting it in advance of the Festival kick-off to encourage linkage among online conversations. D+P also created a calendar of post ideas leading up to the Festival including contests and giveaways on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and strongly encouraged users to vote for the Science Festival as Philadelphia Magazine's "Best of Philly" award in the Events category.

D+P handled all media outreach and interview coordination, and prepared briefings in anticipation of individual interviews and conducted media training with the client. D+P identified a series of strong visuals/photo opportunities for media to capture throughout the Science Festival, many of which appeared as the "Photo of the Day" or the cover photo on various regional media outlets. Additionally, D+P continued to encourage interaction on social media, keeping all social media channels active throughout the Festival, engaging with followers and Festival attendees, and participating in "Tweet-ups" at specific events.

Following the Festival's close, D+P created a robust media re-cap report to capture all results generated.

EVALUATION/RESULTS

- Media results: 265 clips spanning broadcast, print, online and social media. All major greater Philadelphia region markets covered. Total media impressions were over 65,000,000.
- Philadelphia Science Festival was selected for the Top 3 "Best of Philly" Awards in the Best Event category
- Nomination for "Geek Event of the Year" for Drexel Engineering students Guinness World Record attempt
- Facebook likes increased by 20%, Twitter followers increased by 700%, Instagram followers increased by 180%
- Overall attendance for 2014 Philadelphia Science Festival increased 20% from 2013