

PRWeek Covers Pints for Prostates Campaign

December 31st, 2008 . by Rick Lyke

The Jan. 5th edition of PRWeek magazine includes an article about the successful launch of the Pints for Prostates awareness campaign. Here's the text of the story:

Us TOO gets good buzz from beer

Tanya Lewis

December 24, 2008

Last year, a colleague with prostate cancer urged Rick Lyke, senior partner at Eric Mower and Associates (EMA), to get a blood test, which revealed that Lyke had the disease. After successful surgery in April, he initiated a pro-bono partnership with Us TOO International Prostate Cancer Education and Support Network.

Lyke is a freelance writer for beer outlets, and noticed success talking to men about the cancer over a beer. The team created an effort tied to the beer industry in hopes to reach 500,000 men 35 and older by September, National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.

Strategy

Lyke says most prostate awareness efforts spread the word via traditional media or doctors' offices, adding that the tone is more serious.

"It was important to grant men permission into the conversation without scaring them," Lyke notes.

The team focused on stressing early detection and regular blood testing and targeted spirits industry outlets for editorial support. Us TOO pushed messages through its printed educational materials and its Web site (ustoo.com), and members from 325 chapters helped enlist support from local brewers.

"It was a novel way to expand our messaging," says Thomas Kirk, CEO of Us TOO.

Tactics

In May, Lyke began pitching industry publications, Web sites, and bloggers. He also called editors he knew, and issued press releases announcing the program and events.

The team created a Pints for Prostates page on Us TOO's Web site and provided online industry outlets with Web banner ads and badges linking back to the Web page. It also contacted consumer news, sports, and lifestyle publications to donate ad space.

In addition, the team asked brewers and beer bars to lend support in various ways, including hosting local events and making donations.

Results

The team held about 10 events across the US, including in North Carolina and Texas at the Rock Bottom Restaurant & Brewery and the Flying Saucer Draught Emporium chains. Media outlets and breweries donated booth space at four beer festivals. Nearly 60,000 people total attended the festivals, and breweries and consumers at events donated more than \$10,000 to the cause.

Coverage included outlets like All About Beer and DRAFT magazine.

“This campaign surpassed anything we had in mind, and it [provided] the largest context in the history of our organization,” Kirk says.

Future

The team is working to expand brewery involvement, events, and media outreach this year. Social media elements, including Facebook and Twitter, will be added.

Lyke also wants messages printed on beer coasters at many bars and restaurants. Kirk adds that Lyke will join Us TOO’s board of directors in January and “will help guide...other awareness [efforts].”

PRWeek’s view

In time, the team hopes to raise prostate cancer awareness to the level of breast cancer awareness, and this was certainly a good start. It’s not easy to get men thinking or talking about the disease, and Lyke’s idea was a smart and great fit with Us TOO.

It was wise, generous, and commendable of EMA to support this effort. Momentum and an earlier start this year should prove beneficial in expanding outreach.

PR team: Us TOO (Downers Grove, IL) and Eric Mower and Associates (Charlotte, NC)

Campaign: Pints for Prostates

Duration: May-September 2008

Budget: \$1,000