

VitaStrong Communications Plan

I. Situation:

Vitastrong, a health supplement for senior women, needs to raise brand awareness in a largely word-of-mouth campaign centered in Philadelphia (where the brand originated) but positioned to begin to expand nationally.

II. Objectives:

Informational:

1. Raise awareness of the brand using already-existing brand equity and customer loyalty with no advertising
2. Educate audience on health benefits, create buzz

Motivational:

1. Increase sales in Philadelphia by 20%
2. Spark sales outside of Philadelphia nationally (raise by 5-10%)
3. Have a substantial turnout at PR events (concert, pharmacy events)

III. Audience:

Senior women ages 58-80, who are middle to upper middle class, located in Philadelphia and its suburbs, involved in the community (would be interested in giving back to a local small business endeavor, “bring it back to Main Street,”), interested in a healthy lifestyle (gym membership, Relay for Life/breast cancer walk participant, takes supplements but may be unsatisfied with convenience factor.)

We will also target women of the same age range and income bracket, but located in other urban hubs mainly on the East Coast (New York, DC, Boston, Atlanta), with some extending more broadly nationally including San Francisco, Denver, Santa Fe, and especially in Florida, namely Miami; “The percentage of Florida’s population that was 65 and older on July 1, 2004 [was 17%]. Florida led all states in this category” (O’Brien).

IV. Research:

Social media research will not be particularly effective in researching the target demographic for this campaign. While more than half of Americans age 65 and older use the Internet, they are most likely to use email (good opportunity for PR blasts over email) and relatively unlikely to be active on social media, with only “34% of seniors [using] these at all, and only 18% on a typical day” (Gahran).

Effective research ideas:

1. Obtain data collected from pharmacists regarding the trends in prescription medications (especially supplements) for females ages 58-80. We will use this in conjunction with data on supplement purchases. This is secondary quantitative research.
2. Obtain data from health/life insurance companies along with data from customer loyalty programs at supermarket/pharmacy chains. This will provide a link between purchasing patterns of the target market and insurance claims that are filed, making it easier to target the audience based on their specific health needs. This is secondary quantitative research.
3. Collect feedback on current performance of Vitastrong and its competitors

- a. In bottles of product, include information on how to evaluate your product experience online or by mail-in form (seniors may be equally likely to participate in this more traditional form of data collection), with incentives, like “Tell us what you think and receive a free bottle of Vitastrong.” Ask for email addresses on the site to begin to compile a mailing list for PR blasts. This is primary qualitative research.
 - b. Have representatives at pharmacies in the Philadelphia area/metropolitan hubs that will ask senior customers to briefly explain if they always buy the same supplements, why they keep coming back to that supplement, if convenience factors are met, etc. This is also primary qualitative research.
4. Obtain membership data including email lists from organizations such as local and chain gyms in the area, organizations such as the Rotary Club and other community services, through partnerships to promote a healthy lifestyle that will include these organizations in our PR events. Since we have an unlimited budget, local gyms and organizations will want to use this opportunity to get their name out there, and in turn will promote us equally. This is secondary quantitative research.
5. Hold focus groups each comprised of ten members that fall within our target market age range and demographics. They will discuss the following questions:
 - a. Have you heard of Vitastrong? If so, what kinds of feedback have you heard?
 - b. How do you hear about most of the products you use?
 - c. Do you use any kind of health supplement? Why or why not?

- d. If you do use a supplement, are you brand-loyal? What about the product keeps you coming back?
 - e. What is the most important quality to you in a health supplement?
 - f. Do you find taking health supplements to be convenient? What improvements would you suggest?
6. Conduct social media research for the small segment of the market that does participate, all possible information is important to obtain. Determine where online our target market engages the most, what they share and post about the most.

V. Messages:

Improve your quality of life with a glass of water! Vitastrong is the safe, healthy way to supplement your diet with just one drop a day! No discomfort, no mess – simply add to your glass of water.

Support local business and a healthy lifestyle today!

VI. Strategy:

Build brand awareness by:

1. Engaging the target market in promotions and fundraisers
2. Sponsoring events that will appeal to the demographic
3. Sending out email blasts based on the lists obtained during research
4. Informational audio press releases over the radio

5. Social media engagement (a small portion of our target participates in social media, but our establishment there will create transparency. Social media will primarily bolster our other tactics and will not be a main PR tool in itself)
6. All of this will set the ball rolling for widespread word-of-mouth advertising

VII. Tactics:

Objective 1: Raise awareness of the brand using already-existing brand equity and customer loyalty with no advertising.

Tactics to achieve objective:

1. Promotional events at pharmacies
 - a. Provide free samples of Vitastrong
 - b. Small demonstrations to show how simple and convenient it is to use
 - c. Educational events that focus on women's health and how to maintain health as you age
 - d. Encourage word-of-mouth promotion with incentives
 - i. "If you get ten people to sign up for our mailing list, you'll receive a free bottle of Vitastrong and a book containing dietary and nutrition information, as well as exercise regimens, that will help you stay healthy and active as you age."
2. Sponsoring events (will also achieve the motivational objective of sparking sales nationally)
 - a. A 5k walk to support osteoporosis research, held nationally in Philadelphia, New York, DC, Santa Fe, and San Francisco.

- b. Local seminars that focus on the body's aging process and how to remain healthy and active throughout this process.
- c. Fundraising concerts in the major hubs (Philadelphia, Miami, New York, San Francisco), where money raised will go towards the Alzheimer's Foundation of America and to support under-funded hospices.
 - i. Performers will include Willie Nelson, Dickey Betts, and Fleetwood Mac to celebrate their 2013 reunion tour.

Objective 2: Educate audience on health benefits, create buzz.

Tactics to achieve objective:

- 1. Co-sponsor events with organizations such as local and chain gyms in the area, organizations such as the Rotary Club and other community services, through partnerships to promote a healthy lifestyle that will include these organizations in our PR events. All of these organizations are pillars of community life, and are likely to engage active members of our target market. Furthermore, since we have an unlimited budget, local gyms and organizations will want to use this opportunity to get their name out there, and in turn will promote us equally.
 - a. Partner events will include:
 - i. Sponsored scholarship in conjunction with the Rotary Club
 - ii. Sponsor a discounted membership program for seniors at local gyms
 - iii. Town/city-wide programs in partnership with non-profits to raise awareness of senior-related health issues and ways to avoid them

- b. This will cultivate brand equity and a feeling of trust and allegiance to Vitastrong that will arise from a brand image that is giving and involved, with its customers best interests truly at heart.
 - c. These tactics will also provide incentives for our partner organizations to provide us with their mailing lists so that we can send educational and promotional blitzes to our target audience.
2. Use social media to create brand transparency and to promote awareness of our other major promotional events. Social media will not be the primary propellant of this campaign because although American senior citizens are becoming more active online, social media presence remains relatively stagnant, with only “34% of seniors [using it] at all, and only 18% on a typical day” (Gahran). However, due to the social media presence that does exist in our target audience, social media will prove invaluable in helping to reach all corners of audience, especially in raising event awareness.
- a. Social media tactics will be the following:
 - i. Create a Vitastrong Facebook page. Raise awareness of the page in/on bottles of product and through word-of-mouth beginning with representatives in pharmacies. The page will promote our events, including the concerts and fundraisers, and will offer incentives such as the opportunity to win free product or free tickets to one of our events by signing up for our email list and getting others to sign up.

- ii. We will also create a Twitter handle. Although it is unlikely that much of our target audience will be active on Twitter, it is a free and easy way to continue to get our name out there on a national level. We will use cross-promotion in our social media channels, with incentives supporting each. For example, “Tweet about what being healthy means to you and get a chance at winning VIP access to our upcoming sponsored concert!”
3. Develop and distribute *Vitastrong Magazine*, beginning with the mailing lists that we have already obtained. The magazines will focus on women’s and senior women’s health, like how to maintain bone and heart health, etc., throughout the aging process. They will include diet and exercise tips, as well as information on dietary supplements and what kinds work best based on individual needs. It goes without saying that the only brand that will be mentioned by name is Vitastrong. The magazines will also include latest health news, research, etc. Social media will be an essential platform to promote the magazines upon their initial release.
4. The main media targets of our PR events will be local and national news outlets on television and the radio that will cover our events because of the significance that they will hold in the community. For coverage on the radio, we will focus mainly on getting out press releases whose chief purpose will be to inform audiences of the health benefits and convenience of Vitastrong. Secondly, they will also inform audiences of the dates and locations of our concerts, fundraisers, and local promotions.

VIII. Budget:

1. Funds to conduct primary research
2. Funds to orchestrate concerts
3. Funds to establish and hold successful fundraisers
4. Funds to employ sales representatives in pharmacies
5. Funds to purchase important buyer information from pharmacies and insurance companies
6. Funds to provide scholarships in conjunction with Rotary Club

IX. Calendar:

Week 1: Begin conducting research on the target audience, both primary and secondary. Hold focus groups, conduct social media research (the least costly), and begin obtaining shopping patterns of our target audience. This, and for the first month into the launch of the campaign, will be the time during which we will establish the crucial knowledge of our audience.

Week 2: Begin to establish presence in social media. Create Facebook and Twitter accounts and immediately begin posting about product information, promotions, deals, etc. Incorporate promotions of our social media platforms into our products that we are selling in-store. Get our sales representatives into pharmacies, as they will also have the job of promoting our social media through deals and incentives.

Weeks 3-4: Begin production of the magazine; begin to promote it on social media platforms. Get our initial press releases out on radio broadcasts; in this phase, the audio

press releases will cover the health benefits and the convenience factor of Vitastrong, so as to promote community awareness of the product before launching into the dissemination of information on promotional events.

Begin promoting the smaller-scale events at community pharmacies.

Begin teaming up with our target local organizations and engaging in community projects.

Weeks 5-6: Launch small-scale pharmacy events which we will let run for a while before promoting our larger national events (the concerts).

Weeks 7-15: Launch promotion of concerts, which will endure throughout this time period. During this time, we will also continue to maintain our presence in social media and our engagement with our audience and customers. We will also continue to stay involved in our target local communities by working with sponsorships and organizations.

Week 16: Conduct concerts. The first will be on the East Coast, in Philadelphia, Vitastrong's home city. The concerts will continue in the other planned cities over the course of a two-week period.

Week 17-Future: Continued maintenance of established image on all platforms, continued dissemination of information through word-of-mouth advertising.

X. Evaluation:

Production:

1. Did we have a substantial turnout at our concerts?

2. Did sales increase by, at minimum, our intended goals (20% in Philadelphia and 5-10% nationally)?
3. How many audio news releases were broadcast?
4. What was the ROI on our promotional giveaways? Was the audience responsive to and engaged in them?

Exposure

1. How many times was our name and message mentioned in the media as a result of our publicity efforts?
2. Did we our target news outlets (both locally and nationally)?
3. Do we have a high number of likes on Facebook? Do we have followers on Twitter?
4. Are our followers on these platforms active and engaged?
5. Did our sponsored health campaigns generate buzz and media attention?