

Make Your Next PR Campaign A Grassroots-Focused Effort

Though often political in nature, a successful grassroots campaign can also be a fun, public relations strategy.

The Charmin Ultra “Potty Palooza” Campaign is not political, but certainly a clever, highly unusual and definitely fun example of a grassroots campaign.

“Potty Palooza” is an 18-wheel semi-tractor, featuring “27 royal thrones,” all stocked with Charmin Ultra - a super premium two-ply tissue promoted as the “softest, thickest, most absorbent bath tissue available.” The truck, touted as “the plushiest flush in town” by Charmin spokesman Renee Buchanan-West, is on a countrywide tour, visiting outdoor festivals and events, with intent of “Charminizing” the public restroom experience.

One of “Potty Palooza’s” grassroots efforts took place this September in Mountain View, California, during its 32nd Annual Mountain View Art & Wine Festival. The event, sponsored by the local Chamber of Commerce, expected 12,900 “Royal Flushers,” out of an estimated 200,000 art lovers gathered in Silicon Valley.

Just in case, as always when “Potty Palooza” is on the road, Charmin threw in an extra incentive. For every flush, Charmin donated 10 cents to Toys for Tots, or roughly \$1,200 while at the Mountain View Festival.

To be a successful, a grassroots campaign must take its message or its product to the people, though not necessarily in the traditional sense.

Build-A-Bear is a multi-million dollar retail business, utilizing technology to go where the people are, to interact at a grassroots level. Their “inbearmation” technology enables their customers, relaxed in the comforts of their home, office, library, Starbucks

or a friend's house, "to select, stuff, stitch, fluff, name and dress" a cuddly plush toy, usually a bear but also turtles, cats and monkeys.

According to Maxine Clark, founder and Chief Executive Bear, one of its grassroots secrets to success is personalization. Each animal has its own birth certificate or storybook, a personalized voice message fitted into the cuddly toy, plus an individualized barcode, so if the bear is ever lost or stolen and returned to Build-A-Bear, the bear can be returned to its owner.

"When I was ten years old, I lost my teddy bear," says Clark. "I don't want anybody else to ever lose theirs."

At two years old, Build-A-Bear won the Global Best Practices Award for Exceeding Customer Expectations, awarded by Arthur Andersen. Last year, at age five, Build-A-Bear exceeded \$169 million in sales.

Whether on the road or at home, a grassroots campaign takes its message or its product to the people. Add a little humor, personalize the product and any businessmen can turn his or her grassroots campaign into a fun, profitable success.

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