

WINDSTREAM COMMUNICATIONS

Problem

How do you give a large corporation a hometown feel?

Solution

Establish the company's presence through locally targeted out of home efforts.

Background

In the summer of 2006, Valor Communications and the landline business of Alltel merged to form Windstream Communications.

Windstream's brand icon is a green 1950s vintage truck, represents the crossroads of classic and high-tech. The green truck and the tagline "Grow Places" were born out Windstream's deep roots in the local communities. They service 3.2 million access lines in 16 states, mostly in the southeast.

As Windstream likes to say, "Our name may be new, but our roots run deep." Many telecommunications companies feel big, impersonal and uncaring. Windstream has made it their mission to break out of this stereotype, offering their customers products, services and customer service that retain the personal nature of a local phone company.



Objective

When Windstream was formed in 2006, the media agency was retained to build a communications plan that relayed the core values (honest, fun-loving, energetic and in-touch) of Windstream to millions of current customers and also drove sales to new customers. The target for this effort was broad, as anyone who has a home can use phone service, television and/or high speed internet service.

The communications plan had to:

- Drive awareness and sales for this brand-new company
- Speak on the community level and reinforce Windstream as a local phone company
- Stand out in a cluttered field of competitors
- Find a way to efficiently deliver the message to thousands of telephone exchanges that often are not geographically contiguous



Strategy

The media company layered traditional out of home on top of mass media. Traditional out of home formats built off broadcast support in larger markets and served as the sole driver of broad reach and awareness in smaller markets. Out of home allowed Windstream to meet all of their communication objections by driving awareness & sales through high visibility and efficiently delivered our message to thousands of local exchanges by cherry picking locations that were only in our service area.

Plan Details

The traditional out-of-home programs ran all year long—after all people are constantly in the market for telecommunications services, and there is no right or wrong time of the year to switch carriers. Windstream also used street teams at high school football games, shopping malls, and movie theatres to reach customers in their local communities.

Formats Used: Bulletins, Posters, Cinemas, Gas Pump Toppers, Grocery Carts, Street Teams

Results

Our communications plans for Windstream successfully drove awareness and sales

- Unaided awareness increased 32% in the last 6 months of 2007
- Sales goals were met or exceeded in each market
- Broadband penetration in Windstream homes approaching national average (48% vs. 50% nationally), far outpacing the rural average (30%)
- Wall Street projections were consistently met or exceeded

A variety of integrated traditional and non-traditional out of home advertising activities developed by [the agency] helped Windstream achieve our key objectives of measurably raising brand and product awareness in specific, very localized, non-metro market areas. Gas pump toppers, grocery store carts, sidewalk stickers, movie theater ads, mobile billboards and other media complemented other mass and direct advertising efforts to produce the desired results.

Further, [the agency] helped us plan and implement hundreds of Friday Night High School football events, Black Friday consumer facing activities, and other grass-roots marketing efforts, driving deeper brand/product integration and adoption by our target audiences.

– Ron Proleika, Vice President, Marketing Communications, Windstream Communications

