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– Summer Thomas, Media Information Specialist

Challenge

Bass Pro needed to expand awareness and manage campaigns on its many products, educational programs and NASCAR sponsorship, and have the ability to track and measure its results.

Solution

With Vocus’ on-demand software for public relations, Bass Pro creates media lists on the fly, distributes professional, interactive news releases, sorts clips quickly, and can report on coverage by type, geography, location and more.

Results

With Vocus, Bass Pro whittled list development from three hours to three minutes, interfaces more professionally and interactively with reporters, dramatically streamlined clip management, and creates reports in minutes that demonstrate PR’s value to management. As a result, PR increased coverage without adding staff.

Not Just a Fish Story: Bass Pro Shops Reels in More Coverage with Vocus Public Relations

Customer Profile

Bass Pro Shops offers high-quality, affordable gear for professionals and weekend enthusiasts who enjoy camping, fishing, hiking, hunting and boating. Headquartered in Springfield, Missouri, Bass Pro has 22 stores throughout the United States and Canada, and a thriving catalogue and Internet business. In a relatively short period, Bass Pro has established itself as a cutting-edge innovator in the highly competitive world of outdoor retailing. Its unique approach includes cozy, hunting-lodge themed decor, large, comprehensive product displays and professional sales help that not only market the outdoor lifestyle, but live it. The retail chain also offers a variety of workshops to train new outdoor enthusiasts in how to use its products, allowing them to get their feet wet before heading out into the great outdoors.

Challenge

With a name like Bass Pro Shops, you might expect to find mostly rods, bait and tackle. But fishing is just one of the outdoor sports this dynamic retail business serves. Given the diversity of interests supported by Bass Pro, as well as its sponsorship of a NASCAR racing team, the company must communicate to the public and the media on a broad range of topics.

To accomplish that effectively, Bass Pro needs specialized lists to target the most appropriate audiences. Previously, building lists from hardcopy media directories for each store and campaign felt like a hunting expedition for the small PR department, which spent several hours on the task. Then when clips came in, cataloging and reviewing them could take as long as a full day. The team faxed all releases out, which didn’t allow reporters to respond easily. Moreover, PR didn’t have a comprehensive database to store and manage media contacts. Though the company spent a lot of time and energy on PR, it didn’t see the results it desired – nor could it measure its efforts and performance easily. Bass Pro’s small, dedicated PR team needed a way to manage all facets of its PR campaigns – from creating lists to distributing news to reporting.

Vocus Public Relations Solution

Bass Pro chose Vocus’ On-Demand Software for Public Relations to help it communicate the right information to the right media more efficiently. Vocus provides a comprehensive media directory that gives Bass Pro access to over 400,000 media contacts and allows PR to manage details about all its media contacts and quickly generate lists. Plus, with Vocus Analytics, the team could measure its efforts and results.

With Vocus software, Bass Pro PR has easily created more than 50 lists to date, covering each of its 22 stores, as well as national media outreach efforts like NASCAR. Whereas list development once took more than three hours per list, now PR can build a single list in minutes. With PR needing to either create or update a list every week, those time savings add up and give PR back valuable time for more strategic activities. Once PR professionals build a list, they can continuously use and update the same lists, or quickly create new ones.

Interactive Email Distribution Proves Effective Hook with Journalists

Vocus includes a solution to distribute news effectively and efficiently, helping Bass Pro further reduce the time needed to get a release out the door. Using Vocus Email Campaigns, the company has replaced its manual faxing and mailing with simple, yet powerful email distribution of all its news.

With Email Campaigns, Bass Pro creates attractive, interactive news releases that cater to reporters' requirements. "Our releases look a lot more professional," explained Summer Thomas, Media Information Specialist. From within releases, recipients can take links to email Bass Pro with questions or go straight to the Web site for more information. Because PR can embed images without taking up space in recipients' in-boxes, Bass Pro no longer receives returned emails from reporters who can't accept attachments.

Thomas also appreciates that Email Campaigns gives her insight into who opened the release and sought more information, allowing PR to understand journalists' interests and how to approach them in the future. "This lets us follow up with those who are genuinely expressing an interest in our products, and is helping us rebuild some of our media lists," Thomas explained.

Delivers Shortcuts in Clips Management

With Vocus, Thomas also saves significant time in sorting and circulating clips. Bass Pro previously spent as much as a full day hand-sorting clips. Now with Vocus, PR receives clips electronically from Bacon's and Google, and they go directly into the system for PR to review, circulate and report on. Thomas forwards clips to different stores or managers that show the story, ad equivalency value and circulation.

Bass Pro additionally brings broadcast clip reports into Vocus, freeing PR from significant manual data entry. This will prove particularly beneficial for NASCAR races, which can generate more than 1,000 clips for Bass Pro.

Previously, Thomas spent more than a week entering that information by hand. With Vocus, she expects to import clips in just minutes.

Management and PR also appreciate the ease with which they can locate specific clips. Before, Thomas had to manually locate articles in files, make copies and deliver hard copies to upper management. Now, she can pull up one article or all articles about a certain store and immediately print or email them.

Analytics Simplifies Reporting, Keeps Bass Pro on Target

Bass Pro added Vocus Analytics to measure its efforts and tie them to results. PR regularly creates a variety of in-depth reports to look at trends in coverage, measure ad equivalency value, analyze the appearance of key messages, and determine which products receive the most coverage. The ad values are particularly useful, allowing PR to demonstrate to upper management the value of its efforts. Prior to using Vocus, Bass Pro was not able to track ad values, or analyze anything beyond clip counts.

Thomas can build separate reports by store, and show positive and negative coverage. She can also see competitor media coverage by reporter.

But Thomas most appreciates the ease of running reports. "With Vocus Analytics, I don't think creating reports could be any easier," she said. "I can plug in dates and the report is ready in about a minute. It takes longer to print a report than to actually generate one."

Results: Netting Increased Coverage with the Same Staff

An automated, centralized PR systems enabled Bass Pro to increase media efforts, support more stores and increase coverage without adding staff. Bass Pro's coverage levels have gradually increased during the time the company has used Vocus. Thomas attributes that to newfound efficiency in building effective lists, smarter distribution with Email Campaigns, and the ability to capture and analyze clips more easily. "Without Vocus, PR was a lot more labor intensive," Thomas said. "Vocus has so many options for making PR easier."

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