



Category: Best Use of Media Relations

Company: Karol Marketing and Vango

Entry title: Vango's Green Room: Showcasing Innovation

Brief and objectives:

Operating in a crowded marketplace and constantly fighting off competition from cheaper imports, British outdoor brand Vango wanted to target influential media and showcase its complete tent collection together with themed accessories (sleeping bags, chairs etc.)

Vango wanted to demonstrate to board members and investors that the brand had the authority to attract UK media to its 'Green Room', a 2,677m² industrial warehouse, near Port Glasgow.

Our objectives:

- Secure attendance of influential journalists at a press event at Vango's Green Room
- Showcase Vango's innovations and Scottish heritage
- Generate a pipeline of media coverage

Rationale behind campaign, including research and planning:

At the outset, we identified key target journalists with Vango.

Research identified significant challenges that could impact media attendance:

- Location: The Green Room is located opposite a municipal dump near Port Glasgow. It is not a desirable location and average travel times would be approximately five hours
- Trade Shows: Most journalists believe they can see Vango's full collection at major trade shows. Taking an extra day out to go see how a tent was colour matched with a camping chair or sleeping bag is not enough of a crowd puller!
- Vango had nothing new to show media. The last innovation was two years old
- Timing of the event in August was dictated by availability of key Vango staff. This was at the end of the camping season and products had previously been profiled at major trade show 'OutDoor' in June

On a positive note:

- 2016 coincided with Vango's 50th Anniversary

- Vango had a reputation for innovation and history of iconic developments Armed with these findings, we refined our research to explore innovation and 50th anniversary themes, including:
 - Identifying and contacting Vango’s retired founder, Alastair Moodie and Vango’s first ambassador, Alastair Scott (sponsored in 1970) and inviting them to meet for the first time in 36 years
 - Researching partners to collaborate with, including VisitScotland who were promoting their ‘Year of Innovation Architecture & Design’ (YIAD) in 2016 to mark their 50th Anniversary. This bonus collaboration complemented Vango’s heritage and commitment to innovation, resulting in support for our activation and Vango’s innovative products showcased during summer YIAD roadshow.

Strategy and tactics, including the types and variety of media utilised, creativity and innovation:

Our strategy:

- Develop a highly-engaging approach to invite journalists to the Green Room to spark interest and drive conversation
- Tailor activities and story opportunities to each journalist
- Exploit Vango’s proximity to the Scottish great outdoors
- Follow-up with journalists to encourage pipeline activity

Exploiting themes of innovation and creativity, we developed a tactile, two-stage, teaser invitation. (Please see supporting evidence – words do no justice!).

Mechanic One:

Our first mailing, sent to 45 journalists, consisted of a box revealing a Heinz-branded Ketchup bottle BIZARRELY containing Mayonnaise. This lay atop real grass lawn accompanied by an orange tent peg (Vango’s corporate colour).

A handwritten note asked the recipient;

“Not what you expected? It’s time to ketchup with the latest in camping technology. Here is an appetiser of what’s to come...”

The curious note was purposefully written to create intrigue. No address or contact information was included.

Mechanic Two:

A week later, another box was sent to journalists. this time containing a jar filled with nothing but air.... and, one Scottish midge! To create connection between the two invitations, we again used grass lawn. To the naked eye, the jar contained nothing.

The accompanying message read:

“Inside this jar are two ingredients which aid greatly in speedy tent erection. Please insect the contents of this jar carefully. If you are uncertain as to what they are and you’d like to have all revealed, please accept our invitation to come to: The Green Room, Vango, Glasgow on 28th August 2016.”

We then followed up with each journalist to ascertain interest. Many of the journalists were based in the south of England so to incentivise attendance we:

- Promised an unforgettable camping experience on Loch Lomond following the Green Room event
- Encouraged journalists to use their visit as the beginning of an extended family holiday, with tents and equipment provided
- Liaised with VisitScotland and provided each journalist with free entry into local tourist attractions

Having gained insight into each journalist's level of interest and experience in camping, we tailored itineraries, prepared kit lists and set up 1-2-1 meetings with Vango's managing director during their visit.

Implementation of tactics:

Pre-activation activity:

- Researched news hooks from Vango's 50-year heritage to shape the campaign
- Identified relevant journalists and set up publicity opportunities e.g. BBC Radio Scotland
- Developed creative concept, sent out creative mailers and followed-up with 1-2-1 calls
- Discussed exclusive themes and experiences with each journalist
- Briefed and provided media training for Vango spokespeople

Activation activity:

- Supported Vango to deliver exclusive activities and Green Room experience
- Facilitated 1-2-1 briefings between Vango and journalists
- Facilitated BBC Radio interview during the first Alastair Moodie and Alastair Scott meeting

Post activation activity:

- Thanked all attendees and supplied follow-up material
- Organised, placed and followed-up multiple gear orders from journalists for kit profiles
- Followed-up with media who could not attend to secure further coverage
- Organised supplementary VisitScotland 'luxury camping' competition to capture data via e-newsletter and social media

Measurement and evaluation:

- Engaged 45 targeted journalists
- 20 journalists attended Green Room event
- Created significant pipeline of media coverage showcasing Vango innovation and heritage. Highlights included:
 - Dedicated review by Forbes citing Vango as the leading brand in camping technology (circulation 26,180,559)
 - 6 minute BBC Radio Scotland interview with Alastair Moodie and Alastair Scott (291,000 listeners)

- Camping&Caravanning Club magazine interview with Vango founder Alastair Moodie and subsequent article on Vango's aftercare service (circulation 243,260)
- DPS corporate profile of Vango in The Scotsman (circulation of 38,493)
- 7 page DPS in 'Trek & Mountain' on the history of Vango (circulation 25,000)
- Reviews of innovative products in target media, including T3, E&T, Camping Magazine, Adventure Travel, Outdoor Enthusiast etc.
- Over 16 million OTS / OTH (8 Million online, 3 Million in print and 5 Million broadcast – source: Kantar)
- VisitScotland competition to win all-expenses paid camping holiday in Scotland reaching audience of 245,800 through social media and e-campaign
- VisitScotland promoted Vango's innovative AirBeam tent technology during their summer 2016 YIAD roadshow at key tourist locations.

Budget and cost effectiveness:

Fees:

Creative Process (time) £1,890
 Research £2,520
 Planning £3,150
 Media Liaison £1,260
 Execution £2,520

Total fee £11,340

Expenses:

Transport, Accommodation & Subsistence £3,000
 Creative mailer production & postage £1,500
 Contingency £1,000