

2009 PRSA SILVER ANVIL AWARDS

Our Organizations: MGH and TagTeam Global **Our Client:** Pfizer Animal Health
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SITUATION ANALYSIS In early 2007, MGH and TagTeam Global (MGH/TTG) – two agencies working together on public relations activities for Pfizer Animal Health (PAH) – helped launch Slentrol, the first-ever medication to treat obesity in dogs.

PAH is a leading company developing therapeutic treatments for companion animals, livestock, and equine. When PAH’s new first-in-class drug, Slentrol, was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), MGH/TTG worked with PAH to not only successfully manage the announcement, but to educate consumers on the prevalence and danger of canine obesity.

The media results from the launch were phenomenal, but the challenge was to keep canine obesity in the public eye and to motivate dog owners to seek treatment for overweight pets. The result was the National Canine Weight Check (NCWC), a month-long, unbranded health education initiative held in Feb. 2008.

RESEARCH Along with a wealth of market research provided by PAH that led to the development of Slentrol, MGH/TTG used both primary and secondary research to develop the plan for the NCWC.

Primary research: Prior to the Slentrol launch, we determined through anecdotal information gathered through conversations with colleagues, friends and family (and secondary research, below), that while many dog owners were aware being overweight was unhealthy for dogs, many didn’t understand the serious health risks, nor did they know how to identify obesity in their own dogs.

To test this theory, in late 2006, MGH/TTG conducted two surveys – one with dog owners and one with veterinarians – to determine the prevalence of and level of knowledge about canine obesity. The findings showed a significant discrepancy between perception and reality: While only 17% of dog owners considered their dogs to be overweight or obese, veterinarians estimated that 47% of their clients had weight issues.

Secondary research: MGH/TTG identified clinical research studies and data about canine obesity online, and researched Internet dog blogs, social networking sites and forums to understand how dog owners “talked” in order to develop messaging about canine obesity and Slentrol that would resonate. We monitored media coverage of canine obesity and coverage of Slentrol pre- and post-launch to determine how the topic was covered.

Through PAH sales representatives, we learned that although veterinarians were very concerned about canine obesity, many had difficulty bringing the issue up with their clients in the span of a regular check-up – especially if dog owners were also overweight.

PLANNING Our research, combined with our experience with the Slentrol announcement, led us to conclude that dog owners – although often unable to identify obesity in their pets – would be receptive to our messages about the serious risks of canine obesity. With vets looking for support on the issue – and PAH in need of sales support for Slentrol – the stage was set for the National Canine Weight Check.

Objectives

1. **Encourage dialogue about canine obesity between veterinarians and owners**, as measured by:
 - Veterinarian participation in the NCWC
 - Anecdotal feedback from participating vets and dog owners generated by online word of mouth

2. **Generate awareness about canine obesity and Slentrol**, as measured by:
 - Media placements in target markets and key messages delivered
 - Visits to StopCanineObesity.com during February 2008, an educational PAH Web site designed to inform dog owners about the causes and risks associated with canine obesity
 - Number of page views of seeded messages on dog social networking sites, forums and blogs

3. **Generate leads at veterinary practices and drive the use of Slentrol**, as measured by:
 - Hits to the “Find-A-Vet” page on StopCanineObesity.com during February 2008
 - Increased sales opportunities after NCWC

4. **Position Slentrol as the leading treatment before competitors go to market**, as measured by:
 - Media placements and message content analysis of secured media coverage
 - Feedback from participating vets and dog owners through online word of mouth push

Target Audiences: 1) Vet practices throughout the U.S.; and 2) Dog owners throughout the U.S.

Strategy: We developed a strategy using PR, plus word of mouth and some ads, for the NCWC. For one month – Feb. 2008 – dog owners could visit a participating vet to have their dogs’ weight assessed, free of charge. Vet technicians would weigh the dogs and provide owners with information on canine obesity; overweight dogs would be referred to the vet for diagnosis and treatment.

Because the Slentrol launch had been exhaustively covered in the media in 2007, MGH/TTG ensured the consumer-directed part of the campaign was unbranded and suggested partnering with a respected animal welfare organization to bolster credibility. PAH secured the participation of the American Kennel Club Humane Fund.

EXECUTION MGH/TTG implemented the following tactics to execute the NCWC:

- 1. Veterinarian participation:** In Nov. 2007, MGH/TTG created a direct mailer that was sent to vet clinics throughout the U.S., inviting them to participate in the NCWC. Along with efforts by the PAH sales team, MGH/TTG followed up via fax and email in Dec. 2007-Jan. 2008. Vets could sign up at StopCanineObesity.com, return a business reply card attached to the mailer, or return a fax invitation.
- 2. NCWC kit for participating veterinarians:** MGH/TTG equipped participating vets with tools to conduct free weight checks and encourage dialogue about canine obesity, including weight check cards, plus a business reply card with an offer of a free blanket; the Body Assessment Rating for Canines (BARC) Quiz; and a letter with advice on how to open lines of communication with owners about their dogs' weight issues. *(See binder for a complete list and samples of all materials.)*
- 3. Online presence:** MGH/TTG enhanced StopCanineObesity.com to include information about the NCWC and developed a tool where dog owners could enter their zip codes to locate participating vets. The additions were key to our word of mouth outreach, which delivered call-to-action information to dog owners about the NCWC. We targeted pre-qualified forums, social networking and bookmarking sites, and blogs to introduce the NCWC and drive owners to StopCanineObesity.com.
- 4. Media relations:** MGH/TTG implemented a nationwide media campaign to promote the NCWC:
 - *Nov/Dec 2007:* Reached out to long-lead veterinary trade publications and national consumer outlets, and distributed a community calendar listing to get the event included in local community calendars nationwide. Secured participation and media trained vets in target markets.
 - *Jan/Feb 2008:* Distributed a press release announcing the NCWC on Jan. 22, and aggressively pitched national media outlets and 20 top local markets throughout February, securing in-studio or in-clinic interviews with local vets. Completed a radio tour with Dr. Bernadine Cruz on Feb. 8.
- 5. Advertising:** MGH/TTG developed ads targeted for select vet trade, mass consumer publications, and online. *(See binder for ads and list.)*

EVALUATION The NCWC exceeded all expectations and effectively showed that sales can be driven by a carefully planned and executed public relations and word of mouth campaign. Key results:

The NCWC effectively encouraged dialogue about canine obesity between vets and owners.

- 4,100+ vet clinics in 49 states participated, conducting an estimated 200,000 weight checks.
- We received many supportive letters and emails from vets and dog owners illustrating the need for a program like the NCWC and a growing understanding of canine obesity among owners.

The NCWC continued to generate awareness about canine obesity and Slentrol.

- From Jan.-Mar. 2008, Slentrol or NCWC appeared in **800+ news stories (74 million impressions)**.
- We secured coverage in all 20 target markets; average frequency of 3.85 placements per market.
- We secured coverage in 71 of the top 100 U.S. markets; average frequency of 1.97 placements.
- From Jan.1 through Mar. 27, StopCanineObesity.com was viewed more than 260,000 times.
- More than 1,450 people posted comments, became our friend on social networks, social bookmark sites and forums, or attended a meet-up event. Posted comments were 98% positive or neutral.
- More than 52,000 dog owners viewed our messages about the NCWC posted on pre-qualified dog owner/dog lover forums, blogs, social bookmarking sites and social networks.

The NCWC generated leads at veterinary practices and drove the use of Slentrol.

- Almost 40,000 people visited the “Find-A-Vet” page at StopCanineObesity.com from Jan. 21-Feb. 28.
- Only 45% of participating clinics offered Slentrol prior to the NCWC – a sales opportunity for PAH.
- The 55,000 reply cards from dog owners provided valuable sales data to PAH and leads for clinics.
- PAH sales records indicated a 42% increase in dogs on Slentrol in March 2008, which PAH attributed primarily to the NCWC.

Slentrol was positioned as the leading obesity treatment. A Jan. 1-Mar. 15 media analysis revealed:

- 96% of placements about Slentrol/NCWC included information about health risks of canine obesity.
- Of the stories about NCWC, 95% included references to StopCanineObesity.com.
- 84% of all stories included quotes from our designated spokespeople, 47% mentioned Slentrol, and 18% mentioned Pfizer or Pfizer Animal Health – significant percentages for an unbranded campaign.