



Silver Anvil Winner

CORE: Helping a Global Effort to Expand Internet Access in the Face of Political Opposition

Situation

The Internet Council of Registrars (CORE) is a non-profit organization founded to add new structure, free enterprise and competition to the Internet Domain Name System (DNS). CORE planned to run a Shared Registry System to give consumers more choices in names and addresses beyond .com, .org and .net. The registry would compete against the existing monopoly in the U.S., called Network Solutions at the time. CORE and its 87 registrars in 23 countries found a major obstacle: the U.S. government. Negative coverage of CORE was running three-to-one ahead of balanced or positive coverage. The USG was working on a White Paper to put its regulatory spin on deregulation. Initial research indicated the tone was anti-CORE.

The Plan

The agency mission was to position CORE as the world leader in advocating competition and consumer choice in Internet registration services, build a worldwide image of credibility and integrity, rapidly increase awareness of CORE and its mission. Tom Gable and team implemented a strategic plan to promote the soundness of CORE's approach and its integrity among all target audiences, with an initial focus on major global media, key elected and appointed officials and staff. The agency also helped craft materials to present to the USG for inclusion in their White Paper on next steps for deregulation.

The Results

Within five months the analysis coverage showed the pendulum had reversed from three-to-one unfavorable to three-to-one favorable or balanced. More than 40 new organizations had approached CORE asking to apply as new registrars. CORE was to be a major participant in several international meetings to discuss the future of the DNS. Media response to the USG's White Paper was incredibly favorable toward CORE. Improved perceptions and new media relationships helped increase CORE credibility and led to its inclusion in major regulatory hearings as a viable voice for global deregulation. The program earned a Silver Anvil from the Public Relations Society of America, the profession's highest honor.

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