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Media Relations

National Media Relations Program Helps BIO 2008 Set Media Attendance, Coverage Records

Situation

The Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), a Washington, D.C.-based organization, held its annual BIO International Convention in San Diego in 2008, the largest biotech conference in the world. BIO's goals were to increase business and industry leader awareness and attendance and also increase media attendance from the previous year in Boston. Objectives included improving media coverage in three ways: generate a larger volume of articles, improve the quality of coverage and ensure that BIO's key messages were included. When Gable PR was awarded the account, registrations were behind projections. The short-term challenge was to build awareness with aggressive media relations, positioning the quality of the Convention and the added attractiveness of San Diego to all of its audiences.

The Plan

Gable PR created a plan that supported the BIO goals with strategies to increase the depth and breadth of stories on the biotech industry, its value, the content and impact of the Convention, and solidify BIO as the industry's voice in public policy and in ongoing education about the importance of biotech to the world. The plan included different approaches to the life science and beat reporters in biotechnology, with targeted approaches to the general broadcast and print media assigned to cover the convention as a one-time event scheduled to ramp up later.

To educate media and attendee targets, Gable PR created custom media materials including a media kit, news releases, media advisories, calendar announcements, fact sheets, and a series of pitches directed to different niches (i.e. environment, energy, genomics, regenerative medicine, genetically modified foods, etc.). The team developed relationships with key editors and reporters from local, regional, national and international trade publications. The media kit was used to educate the media (create awareness). This was followed by a steady flow of news leading up to the Convention to build understanding. The content of the Convention provided clear differentiation versus other events. The approach led to media coverage on all fronts, from local to international and from six months before the convention to months afterward.



The Results

- The 2008 Convention exceeded its attendance goals and far exceeded its media relations goals and objectives.
- The Convention hosted 353 registered media including 29 broadcast media, 58 print, 121 international, 10 online, 160 trades and 10 top-tier media. BIO saw a 68 percent increase in international media attendance.
- More than 20,000 attendees, 2,100 exhibitors and 60 domestic, country and regional exhibitors attended the Convention, exceeding early projections.
- The media coverage report included 864 stories accounting for a total of more than 262 million impressions. CBS Evening News, Forbes and The New York Times were among the top-tier coverage from the event.
- Five San Diego television stations provided daily feature and news coverage.
- Coverage of protestors was limited to one day and more than 50 percent of the coverage conveyed one of BIO's four key messages.

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