



CallWave: Immediate Media Results for the Internet Answering Machine

Situation

CallWave tapped current members of the Gable PR team at their previous agency, The Gable Group, to jumpstart consumer publicity for its Internet Answering Machine (IAM), a free service that allows single-phone-line Web surfers to hear who is calling while they are online. Within the first two weeks on the account, the team identified two news hooks that provided story opportunities and enabled it to deploy a strategic media blitz that would reach large consumer audiences. Research determined that the 2000 presidential nominating conventions would be the first in which a significant number of "political junkies" would turn to the Internet for a constant flow of news. During the late summer, as kids were preparing to go back to school and back to the books, the agency team also recognized an opportunity as the "Harry Potter" book series hit the peak of its popularity.

The Plan

The agency team pitched political reporters at the top 50 newspapers in the U.S. to position the IAM as a useful service to readers who spent hours on political Web sites during the Republican and Democratic conventions. The agency offered CallWave as a helpful sidebar to accompany the daily election news. At the same time, Cook led an effort to target children's book editors and feature editors with a letter that detailed how the IAM could save single-phone line families the aggravation of missed calls, especially as kids were spending hours on the Internet for homework and to surf "Harry Potter" sites. The agency team created story opportunities for each publication using statistical information germane to its readership.

The Results

CallWave received coverage in major publications including the *Washington Post*, *USA Today* and *Access Magazine*. More than 150 publications covered the story, including *Rolling Stone*, *Money Magazine*, *Girls' Life*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Dallas Morning News*, and *The Minneapolis Star Tribune*, as well as wire services, such as Dow Jones and Gannett. As print coverage escalated, CallWave could track a corresponding increase in downloads of its IAM. The improved image and reputation also helped support CallWave as it sought venture funding.

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