

PR WEEK

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CONSUMER PR

Uncover savings in car insurance

Client: Progressive Auto Insurance (Mayfield, OH)
PR Team: Jericho Communications (New York, NY)
Campaign: Shopping for Auto Insurance and Underwear
Time Frame: June 15 - October, 2000
Budget: \$74,000

As the name suggests, the sales technique is progressive. When consumers shopping for auto insurance call Progressive or log on to Web site www.progressive.com, they can receive quotes from up to four of the company's competitors.

Progressive conducted a study that uncovered the aver-

age difference between the highest and lowest premium available to consumers for the same policy. Results showed up to \$500 differences depending on company and region. But since 1994, the company tried, with no success, to get this information out via print media.

"Insurance isn't exciting," says Kathleen Colan, PR exec at Progressive. Adds Kathy Bell of Jericho Communications, the company's agency of record, "The message is you can save money by shopping for insurance. It seemed self-serving. No one picked up the message."

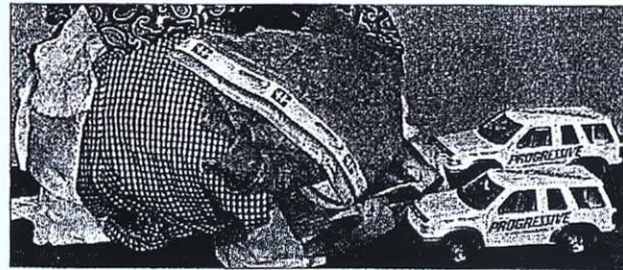
Strategy

Jericho took advantage of the fact that the Web site is one of the most visited Internet sites and ranked best site for auto insurance buyers by Gomez

Advisors. (Progressive won't comment on the number of hits received.) The agency set up a consumer survey on the site that asked how much time people would spend to save money. Findings revealed that 46% never shopped for auto insurance, which could save them hundreds of dollars, yet 40% spent up to two hours shopping to save 50% on underwear. The agency used the underwear aspect to get Progressive's message heard.

Tactics

Jericho incorporated the survey information in a press release and sent it to national media. The underwear angle caught reporters' attention and generated articles. It created a stir for consumers who think they are careful shoppers. People pressed for time



Progressive... comparing prices—not just for underwear

actually shopped carefully for underwear but regarded auto insurance with little interest? This was news.

The biggest hit came when *The Wall Street Journal* ran the story on the front page in their Business Bulletin column. Kathy Bell says a second tier of press releases using *The Wall Street Journal* story as a hook, went out to radio and TV.

Colan's in-house team,

along with 15 to 20 local PR firms hired by regional offices, worked in conjunction with Jericho to distribute press releases to local print media and business leaders, slanting statistics on premium variance according to area.

Results

Articles about the campaign ran in 16 large newspapers, including *The Washington*

Post, *Chicago Tribune*, *Arizona Republic*, *Des Moines Register*, *Salt Lake Tribune* and *Bellingham Herald*. A syndicated column "Off-Kilter," also picked up the piece. Other national media coverage included *US News and World Report* and *Newsweek*. UPI picked up the lead and sent it out on wire, which resulted in coverage on Fox News Radio, Peoples' Radio Network, Business Talk Radio Network, and WTAM-AM, in Cleveland, OH.

Colan used PRTrak to track results. She claims the return on media blitz investment is worth \$170,000 of advertising.

Future

Jericho and Progressive are going to continue the survey process.

Jeannie McCabe