

A SHAMAN, A RAINFOREST AND A COMPUTER: CONSUMERS LOG ONTO ALLHERB.COM TO GET BACK TO NATURE

AllHerb.com with Jericho Communications

Category 59: Web Site Promotion

OVERVIEW:

Here's a question that has rolled off the lips of e-commerce start-up visionaries all over the world: "How do we quickly brand our site and capture the e-dollars of both seasoned and novice web shoppers?" Get ready to take notes from one of today's hottest health-related web sites. AllHerb.com merged technology with Amazonian shamanism to create an irresistible mystique that successfully attracted visitors in droves and branded AllHerb.com as the authentic herbal Web site. Jericho Communications urged AllHerb.com to fight the raging competition among health-related sites and differentiate itself by returning to its "roots," by positioning itself as "the most authentic resource for herbal medicine available today." AllHerb.com hired an unusual and captivating spokesman (a shaman, tribal healer and herbalist from the Amazon rain forest of Peru) to share his ancient wisdom and interact with visitors at the site. Jericho's publicity campaign about the old meeting the new through AllHerb.com's online medicine man attracted media attention nationwide -- and increased site traffic by 600 percent from an average of 50,000 to 300,000 hits a month. Investors caught wind of the phenomenon and reached out to AllHerb.com. Apparently our high tech world is longing for a little shaman magic.

PLANNING:

The objectives of the program were to:

- * Stimulate consumer traffic to the AllHerb site (www.AllHerb.com)
- * Increase awareness of AllHerb as an authority in herbal medicine

To do this the following strategies were employed:

- * Demonstrate its point of differentiation (authenticity) by linking with a shaman as its spokesman and resident herbal expert
- * Conduct a compelling contest that motivates consumers to log on and register at the site, while underscoring AllHerb.com's position as the most authentic herbal resource on the web

AllHerb.com's target audiences were:

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- Current and potential consumers of alternative healthcare products
- * Consumer-oriented and business media, as conduits to above audiences

JERICO'S CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY:

At Jericho, we develop our publicity programs from the viewpoint of our clients' key target audiences. We focus not only on what the client does, but on what their target audiences want and desire. We then position our client in a way that speaks to those emotions and motivations. Our AllHerb.com publicity program was devised to excite consumers about this online herbal advisor. Most of the company's potential customers care little about Web site technology itself. They do care, however, about how the site can help them live healthier lives, find exotic herbal remedies and learn more about alternative medicine. We targeted the fringe users, those who have the capability to shop online to get this type of information, but have not yet made it a common practice. We used the language, the motivations and media outlets of the non-web literate to quickly drive new web traffic to the site. People logged on to AllHerb.com because we tapped into the emotions that helped them internalize the message and put AllHerb.com to good use in their own lives. We sent out a call to action on AllHerb.com's behalf and customers answered by logging on in droves, sending sales skyrocketing.

EXECUTION:

Shaman as Spokesman – At the core of the AllHerb.com promotion was a touch of shaman magic, and the draw of ancient ways merging with new. Jericho recommended that AllHerb.com leverage their collaboration with Shaman Don Antonio Montero Pisco, an expert on native medicinal plants who is based deep within the Peruvian rain forest. Don Antonio is also the curator of the ethnobotanical garden at the Amazonian Center for Environmental Education and Research. AllHerb.com made the shaman available at their site to answer consumer questions by e-mail, offer advice and be a general source of invaluable information about herbalism. A press release announced this new addition to AllHerb.com's esteemed staff of herbal experts. Don Antonio's online presence focused on the mystique of herbalism and fortified AllHerb.com's position as the most authentic herbal resource on the web.

While web surfers around the world had online access to the Amazonian Shaman, Jericho brought him and his secret healing herbs in person to the streets of New York and Washington, DC. He spoke to groups of children at the John Eaton Elementary School in Washington, DC, about the many healing uses of his native herbs as well as the importance of rain forest preservation. He then journeyed to New York's Botanical Garden, where he addressed a receptive crowd on the same topics.

Trip to the Rain Forest Not Just a Virtual Experience – During the 60-day online promotion, visitors to AllHerb.com could register for a drawing for a free nine-day trip to Peru, where they would meet Don Antonio and attend an "Amazon Pharmacy from the Rain Forest" workshop. The trip was geared toward hard-core adventurers who would thrill at the idea of traipsing through the heart of the rain forest by the side of an honored shaman. More than 18,000 people

registered online for the trip. The nature of the contest further reinforced AllHerb.com's position as the most authentic online herbal resource.

EVALUATION:

1) Consumers Log On. With limited resources but plenty of resourceful thinking, Jericho successfully put AllHerb.com on the map. Traffic to the site skyrocketed from an average 50,000 to 300,000 hits a month during the promotion – an increase of 600 percent. Sales jumped from \$30,000 to \$200,000 a month after the shaman promotion, and continued to climb to \$700,000 a month shortly thereafter. The high volume of online shoppers was sustained well beyond the publicity campaign. Publicity was the clear driver of the increase in site hits and sales because AllHerb.com did very limited print advertising and no online advertising at this time.

2) Raising Awareness. More than 29 million media impressions were generated nationwide about AllHerb.com, including placements in: FORTUNE, INC., USA TODAY, WASHINGTON POST, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, LOS ANGELES TIMES, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, ARIZONA REPUBLIC, DETROIT NEWS, DENVER POST, SEATTLE TIMES, MIAMI HERALD and local newspapers around the country. A USA TODAY headline read "AllHerb's Magic Ingredient: Jungle Shaman;" while the WASHINGTON POST considered AllHerb founder Ken Hakuta to be one of "three men vying to be the electronic vitamin king." A feature article in INC. magazine noted AllHerb.com (which has invested \$3 million in its site) as a competitor to Greentree.com (which has spent \$14 million on its site) and MotherNature.com (with a \$23 million investment).

But AllHerb.com's appeal reached far beyond the news pages and into the inner circle of American business. As a result of the WASHINGTON POST article, AllHerb's founder Ken Hakuta received calls from interested venture capitalists. And according to PC DATA, AllHerb.com has been rated the number one site for alternative medicine. Not bad for a site that foregoes advertising and banner ads in favor of PR.