

FIDO CAN HELP LOWER LIFE INSURANCE RATES -- AMERICA FINDS OUT HOW

American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) with Jericho Communications

Category 89: Video News Production

OVERVIEW:

If the true essence of public relations is to clearly communicate commercial messages with third-party endorsement and the greatest degree of credibility, this campaign is a paragon example of what PR should be. It not only achieved third-party endorsement, but also fourth-party endorsement in powerfully delivering APPMA's primary commercial message.

Can Fido help curb life insurance costs? Yes, indeed, thanks to APPMA and the Midland Life Insurance Company.

A not-for-profit association, APPMA helps its members (manufacturers and importers of pet products) prosper by encouraging consumers to buy pets and care for them responsibly. The organization charged Jericho with a mission to spread the word that owning a pet can provide a variety of health and emotional benefits. Jericho devised an ingenious promotion for APPMA with Midland Life to demonstrate how pets can save peoples' lives...and their money. News anchors at television stations, from coast to coast, delivered the good news to consumers. And, America found out just how Fido could help chew the fat off of insurance bills.

PLANNING:

The sole objective of the program was to:

- * Raise awareness among the American public about the health and emotional benefits of pet ownership

To accomplish this goal, the following strategies were employed:

- * Establish an innovative partnership with a life insurance carrier, illustrating the health benefits message of pet ownership
- * Identify spokespersons and cite research supporting the positive news of pet ownership
- * Generate widespread publicity through a compelling VNR

APPMA's target audience is:

- * Current and potential pet owners living in the United States
- * Consumer-oriented television outlets, as conduits to above audiences

JERICO'S CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY:

We believe that emotion -- a deep sense of understanding and feeling -- is the fuel that drives the influence of public relations. It secures media placements; it generates awareness; but most importantly, emotion gets target audiences to internalize the messages that we intend for them. When creating publicity campaigns, we also use the audience's viewpoint. We concentrate not only on what the client does, but also on what the client does for the audience. For APPMA, for instance, we clearly demonstrated how sharing your life with animals can be good for your health...and your pocketbook.

EXECUTION:

Jericho created a one-of-a-kind partnership for APPMA with Midland Life Insurance Company that offered consumers a novel way to cut down on rising life insurance costs. Everyone knows that people who refrain from smoking can get better insurance rates. Well, this promotion showed that pets could be so good for people that qualified pet owners could actually reduce their insurance rates. The VNR cited research studies showing that caring for pets can lower blood pressure and stress levels, help prevent heart disease and fight depression. An esteemed Professor of Veterinary Pathology and an enthusiastic pet owner both provided testimonials. Then Midland Life Insurance Company declared to the American public that it had taken the concept one step further -- that it now recognized pet ownership as a healthy lifestyle choice, potentially leading to lower rates for qualified applicants.

The campaign took a commercial message (buy pets because they're good for you); made it credible (pets are good for your health and emotional state, as proven by scientific studies); and then made it newsworthy (pets are so good for you that now you can even get a discount on life insurance if you own a pet!). The VNR was distributed in May, National Pet Month, to a broad base of television outlets nationwide.

EVALUATION:

Because the health benefits of pet ownership were inherent in the promotion itself, the resulting 100.7 million media impressions hit the publicity target right on the mark. A CNN anchor, for instance, reported: "Pets are known to ease loneliness, calm people down, and improve mental health. Now, having a pet could also help your bottom line." Sixty-three broadcasts aired in cities and towns across the country, from Miami to Seattle...from Boston to Sacramento...and just about everywhere in between.

The campaign simply and powerfully demonstrated APPMA's primary message with just a few words: Did you hear that if you have a pet you could get a discount on life insurance.