

TAKING THE WEB OFF LINE AND INTO THE HEARTS AND MINDS OF CONSUMERS

Achieving the Holy Grail of Branding: a Web Entry into the Mainstream

Big Yellow with Jericho Communications

Category 59: Web Site Promotion

OVERVIEW:

Extreme snowboarding, extreme mountain biking, extreme TV... Well, now there are "Extreme Travel Deals." The new travel service developed by Big Yellow (the leading on-line shopping directory) offers consumers drastically discounted, last-minute travel deals on airfare, hotels, car rentals and vacation packages. But, the only way to snatch up these super travel savings is by going online. So, to drive traffic during the official launch of the new site, Jericho created a consumer contest with an "extreme" prize. The promotion generated outrageous results, motivating consumers to visit the site in droves...and breaking records to become the most popular contest ever undertaken by Big Yellow.

PLANNING:

The objectives of the program were to:

- * Stimulate consumer traffic to Big Yellow's new Extreme Travel Deals site (www.extremedeals.com)
- * Increase general awareness about Big Yellow's on-line yellow pages and shopping directory

To do this, the following strategies were employed:

- * Launch Extreme Travel Deals through a humorous consumer survey/contest with an online registration component
- * Create a compelling news story that publicizes the contest by tapping into Valentine's Day

Big Yellow's target audiences were:

- * Current and potential online shoppers
- * General and travel-oriented consumer media, as conduits to above audiences

JERICHO'S CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY:

At Jericho, our publicity programs use the audience's viewpoint. We focus not only on what the client does, but on audience wants and desires. We then position our client to answer these emotions. Our Big Yellow "Weekend Romance" online survey, for instance, was devised to excite cyber shoppers about the company's Internet-based travel service. But most of the company's potential customers care little about Web site technology itself. They do care,

however, about how the site could help them book a romantic weekend getaway – and more importantly, how they can secure amazing travel deals. We targeted the fringe users, those who have the capability to log on to get this type of information, but have not yet made it a common practice. We used the language, the motivations and the media outlets of the non-web literate to quickly drive web traffic to the site. They logged on to Extreme Travel Deals because we tapped into the emotions that helped our client's target audiences internalize the message, and then act on it.

EXECUTION:

In phase one, Jericho created a "Weekend Romance" online consumer survey. Posted and promoted on the Big Yellow site, the informal research polled visitors about their weekend activities, including questions about romantic interludes. It was designed to provide a newsworthy hook to officially launch Extreme Travel Deals on Valentine's Day. It also created the mindset and the scenario that the customer would typically be in when making an online travel purchasing decision – such as, logging on mid-week to check out deals for weekend getaway spots. The survey itself found that 62 percent of respondents rated weekends spent at home as low on the romance scale when compared to weekends away. Good news for a new travel service.

A press release then announced the survey results, as well as a contest offering an "extreme" romantic opportunity. Passion-depleted couples who entered could win a "Getaway Giveaway" trip to Alaska -- a place where dwindling romance could be rekindled because nothing would keep them warmer than letting love take its course. All they had to do was log on to Extreme Travel Deals and register.

EVALUATION:

1. Consumers Log On. With limited resources but plenty of resourceful thinking, Jericho successfully launched the new Big Yellow feature and surpassed the client's goal for driving traffic to the site. 21,114 people logged on to Extreme Travel Deals during the one-month promotion, and the high volume of cyber shoppers was sustained well beyond the actual campaign. Extreme Travel Deals is fast becoming Big Yellow's most popular online option, with double the typical daily site visits for a new section.

2. Raising Awareness. Publicity about the promotion increased awareness for the overall Big Yellow site as well as the Extreme Travel Deals section. Again exceeding the client's expectations, the campaign generated 4.3 million media impressions -- more than double the original. Coverage spanned every major region of the country, including placements in: NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, ATLANTA CONSTITUTION, ORLANDO SUN SENTINEL, SACRAMENTO BEE, ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH, USA RADIO NETWORK, and a variety of regional media outlets. In addition to the contest entries that were submitted electronically, nearly 3,000 more were mailed in by people who presumably did not have Web access but heard or read about the promotion. That's 100 times the number of mail-in entries (usually 30 or so) typically

generated by Big Yellow contests. No doubt, the good word about Big Yellow is spreading.

The Extreme Travel Deals promotion lived up to its name, breaking records to become the most successful contest ever run by Big Yellow. Sometimes going to the extreme (with a backpack full of creative publicity ideas) is the only way to get the job done.