

## AMERICA LEARNS PETS ARE GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH...AND YOUR POCKETBOOK

American Pet Products Manufacturers Association with Jericho Communications

Category 45: Not for Profit Organizations

### OVERVIEW:

Can petting a pooch relieve stress on Tax Day? Owning fish create more harmonious marriages? Can Fido help curb insurance costs? You bet! It's been proven that owning a pet can provide a variety of health and emotional benefits. And, that's exactly what the American Pet Products Manufacturers Association (APPMA) set out to communicate to American consumers. By encouraging responsible pet ownership, the not-for-profit association is actively helping its members (manufacturers and importers of pet products) to prosper. Charged with a mission to spread the good news of pet ownership to Americans everywhere, Jericho developed a multi-faceted publicity program. Lighthearted surveys, humorous events and other attention-grabbing news stories resulted in a record 367 million media impressions generated during the course of the 12-month public relations program. Through Jericho's publicity efforts, perhaps America is on its way to realizing APPMA's vision: a society where every household has pet(s) that are treated responsibly and with care.

### RESEARCH:

As a leading pet trade association, APPMA routinely supports industry-related market research and scientific research, and regularly delivers those results during media interviews. Jericho also frequently devises and conducts informal polls with the express purpose of generating publicity. Always eager to hear good and informative news, consumer-oriented media tend to gobble up these witty surveys -- just as happily as a pooch munching on his favorite treat.

### PLANNING:

The sole objective of this public relations program is 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:

- \* Create a series of compelling news stories to demonstrate that responsible pet ownership can be good for one's health
- \* Use original research and/or a tongue-in-cheek news approach to extend positive coverage of pet ownership beyond the trade press and into the pages of top consumer media
- \* Piggyback pet ownership messages onto topical issues (e.g., income tax day and rising life insurance costs)

APPMA's target audience is:

- \* Current and potential pet owners living in the United States
- \* Consumer-oriented print and broadcast media, as conduits to above audiences

#### JERICHO'S CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY:

We believe that emotion -- a compelling 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. We also use the audience's viewpoint when creating publicity campaigns. We concentrate not only on what the client does, but on what the client does for the audience. With APPMA, for instance, we switched the focus from pet message "out" (hitting consumers with the "pets are healthy for you" message), to consumer need "in" (we took pets to the stressful or unhealthy situations that consumers commonly face and demonstrated how sharing their lives with animals can actually help people).

#### EXECUTION:

- \* Tax-Time Petting Day – APPMA teamed with the Humane Society of New York to help people relieve stress on tax day. On April 15th, a petting pen containing six cuddly puppies was set up outside the main Post Office. Passers-by were encouraged to take a relaxing moment from their high-pressure schedules to stroke the ever-grateful pooches. Their wagging tails and smiling faces drew a constant crowd throughout the 6-hour "event." A press release announcing the attraction was distributed to the media. The story was widely picked-up by both national and local press (resulting in 91.3 million media impressions), and clearly delivered the health benefits message of pet ownership.

- \* Life Insurance Tie-In – APPMA created a one-of-a-kind partnership with Midland Life Insurance Company that offered consumers a novel way to cut down on insurance costs. Everyone knows that people who refrain from smoking can get better insurance rates. Well, this promotion showed that pets can be so good for people that qualified pet owners could reduce their insurance rates, as well. A press release and VNR were distributed in May (National Pet Week) to a broad base of print, television and radio outlets. Because the health benefits of pet ownership were inherent in the promotion, the resulting 100.7 million media impressions hit the publicity target right on the mark.

- \* Focusing on Fish Survey – A tongue-in-cheek, informal survey (a random sampling of 100 respondents conducted on the boardwalk near the Coney Island Aquarium -- 50 who owned fish and 50 who didn't) was developed to highlight the positive health attributes of owning fish. The press release drew fun, quirky conclusions in an effort to take the typical scientific studies about the health benefits of pet ownership out of the lab and into the everyday lives of people. This consumer-driven approach -- featuring results such as fish owners are less likely to get divorced, are not as inclined to argue, or are less likely to suffer stress-related ailments -- provided APPMA with an additional voice in support of their educational mission. Once again, the campaign made a big

splash with the media, generating more than 40 million upbeat media impressions in the consumer press.

\* "Pets for Everyone" News Bureau – The core media programs showcased above were supplemented by ongoing news bureau activities throughout the year. Consumer-focused efforts included: a "Virtual Pet Trade-In Promotion"; a holiday gift guide satellite tour; three mat features; a "Dress Your Pet" Halloween event; and an announcement highlighting some of the fun pet products launched at APPMA's must-attend annual pet products trade show. All totaled, these straightforward media campaigns (delivered with a playful twist) created another 135.5 million media impressions containing pet ownership health benefits messages.

#### EVALUATION:

1. Awareness Rising. Throughout the year-long campaign, more than 367 million people heard, saw or read about the health benefits of pet ownership. The publicity challenge was simply to generate increased awareness for the positive contributions that pets can make to people. In most cases, the press coverage also noted APPMA as the source, an additional benefit of the program that reached beyond the original objective. Publicity generated through this year's program tripled that of the previous year, and was worth an estimated \$136 million in ad equivalencies. While many national associations spend millions of dollars on promotional campaigns, APPMA and Jericho accomplished comparable results with a relatively small public relations budget of \$180,000 and no advertising budget whatsoever.

2. Jumping onto the Consumer Pages. The campaign successfully extended APPMA's key message well beyond the trade press and into the consumer pages, including print placements in: TIME, NEWSWEEK, WALL STREET JOURNAL, U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT, ASSOCIATED PRESS, REUTERS, GANNETT, USA TODAY, LOS ANGELES TIMES, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, NEW YORK POST, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER, DETROIT FREE PRESS, ARIZONA REPUBLIC, CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, BOSTON HERALD, TAMPA TRIBUNE, MIAMI HERALD, BALTIMORE SUN, SACRAMENTO BEE, CRAIN'S NEW YORK BUSINESS...and many, many more.

Inspiring pet ownership messages also rang through the airwaves via: CBS "SATURDAY MORNING," THE MAURY POVICH SHOW, ABC NEWS, NBC NEWS, FOX NEWS, CNN TODAY, THE TODAY SHOW, THE ROSIE O'DONNELL SHOW, WORLD NEWS TONIGHT, NPR, WCBS NEWSRADIO 88, WINS 1010 MORNING NEWS, PET TALK AMERICA, BLOOMBERG NEWS, ALL NEWS CHANNEL...and scores of local broadcasts.

Complementing the extensive coverage in the top 15 U.S. markets, mat features and syndicated articles appeared regularly in secondary and tertiary markets. These local media efforts deepened penetration in small towns throughout the country, further reinforcing messages delivered through the leading national consumer media. Chances are, if you live in America, sometime during the past year you heard that pets are good for your health, and maybe even your pocketbook!