

REACT THROUGH CREATIVE?

PR agencies are working hard to prove that strategic thinking can be creative, too. Sara Yin reports

Microsoft: Xbox 360

Brief To introduce Microsoft Xbox 360 as the culture-changing entertainment and lifestyle icon of the next generation of videogame consoles in Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea and Taiwan

Target audience Hardcore gamers
Agency Edelman

THE CHALLENGE

Following a successful US launch of the Xbox 360 in 2005, an Asian rollout the following year faced a much tougher market situation, coinciding with launches of Sony's PS3 and the Nintendo Wii.

THE CAMPAIGN

Needing to put Microsoft at the forefront of a hotly-contested category, Edelman needed to create groundswell for the product months before its regional launch. With less than US\$1 million to work with, Microsoft deployed its first regional viral campaign via blogs and word-of-mouth to hardcore gamers solicited by Edelman.



Xbox...Edelman leveraged hype and created a buzz via a viral campaign

Offline, Edelman also organised an advocacy programme, tapping local celebrities and personalities to act as spokespeople for themed events and ads.

THE RESULTS

By June 2006, Xbox had sold a record five million consoles in the region. According to

Edelman, the campaign tracked a total of 81 million Asian consumers and media across the four Asia-Pacific markets, and over 6,000 Xbox fans attended celebrity-backed launch events.

Game makers such as Phantagram and Interserv also signed new development deals with Microsoft.

THE VERDICT



Veena Gidwani CEO, Madison Public Relations

Pre-launch media experience workshops and advocate programmes were a great idea, as was the use of an integrated viral PR and marketing programme using blogs and word-of-mouth. A cool approach for a cool product. Customising Asia-specific key messages and involving local celebrities would definitely have contributed to giving the international brand 'made for me' appeal.

However, while the media strategy was powerful, the target audience was not clearly outlined and the case study does not share the role of the celebrities or involve any unique, creative PR idea.

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