

“In just one year, we tripled media coverage, reduced the amount of negative news, and increased the amount of impressions with the correct use of the organization’s name and key messaging by 535 percent.”

Rachel Querry, Deputy Director, Media Relations

Vocus Public Relations Helps The Humane Society Unleash Increased Coverage – and Provides the Numbers to Prove It



With more than eight million members and constituents, The Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) is the nation’s largest animal protection organization. For nearly 50 years, The HSUS has been a mainstream voice for animals, with active programs in companion animals, wildlife, animals in research, and farm animals and sustainable agriculture.

Challenge

With the far-reaching mission of “promoting the protection of all animals,” The HSUS follows approximately 300 issues – everything from puppy mills to animal fighting to animal research. To ensure that the organization’s voice is represented accurately in the media, The HSUS must closely track national media coverage and reporters.

Viewing pro-active PR as the most cost-effective and efficient way to reinforce The HSUS brand, executives and the board issued a mandate to Media Relations: increase the quantity and quality of coverage through more strategic and proactive media outreach. Primarily, they aimed to increase the visibility of The HSUS, protect the organization’s mainstream image, and measure the value of media coverage in achieving program and financial goals.

Vocus Public Relations Solution

Faced with this challenge, the media relations team developed a multi-part strategy that included Vocus Public Relations software. Vocus would empower the small staff to more efficiently track national coverage, manage media contacts and distribute highly targeted communications.

Since deploying Vocus, HSUS Media Relations has streamlined media management and enhanced internal communication because the team now has a real-time, current record of all contacts in one centralized location. Plus, with all activities recorded in Vocus, when it comes time to build lists or pitch stories, the team has greater confidence that they’re reaching the right targets.

“Never before have we had the ability to keep track of the reporters that have been covering our issues,” said Rachel Querry, Deputy Director, Media Relations. “With Vocus, I can record all communication with

reporters and then quickly pull up that person's contact information and know that's the right person to pitch."

Simplified Issue Tracking Promotes Proactive Pitching

Vocus also helps The HSUS track coverage on hundreds of issues and respond proactively. News clips collected through outside services – averaging more than 450 per month – are downloaded directly into Vocus.

Media Relations easily tracks which reporters cover certain issues and can launch targeted campaigns in response. In one instance where the Fish and Wildlife Department wanted to change regulations for managing Canada geese, Query tracked all coverage on the issue. In Vocus, she quickly pulled together lists of reporters interested in the topic and invited them to a teleconference. The highly targeted effort netted stories in several major publications and resulted in new relationships with reporters.

Likewise, Vocus assists in reigning in negative coverage by enabling The HSUS to respond aggressively to a small number of negative articles each year.

Streamlined, Cost-Effective News Distribution

Vocus list-building capabilities let the team create its own customized lists on nearly a daily basis, which saves time, cuts costs and results in more effective lists. And by sending out its approximately 200 releases annually through Vocus, Media Relations shifted news distribution away from costly newswire services, can personalize releases with notes, and reach media contacts sooner. Or, they can send a quick heads-up memo when the information doesn't warrant a full release.

Vocus also supports the organization's goal of measuring its efforts. Using Vocus Analytics, Media Relations generates monthly reports for senior executives on clip counts and audience impressions. The department can examine media coverage by major issue, as well as track positive and negative stories, which highlights areas for greater emphasis.

Results: More Media Inquiries, Increased Coverage Drive Membership Growth

Without adding professional staff or budget, in one year the team effectively handled a 250 percent increase in media inquiries and was able to focus more on strategic activities by automating many PR functions. In just one quarter, Media Relations boosted coverage by 967 percent, reduced the amount of negative news from 14 percent of stories to just one percent of all reported stories, and increased the amount of impressions with the correct use of the organization's name and key messaging by 535 percent.

Vocus not only supported these achievements, but allowed the team to demonstrate key trends to share with management. Ultimately, the team tied increased coverage to a membership gain of more than 28,000 and to the addition of more than 800,000 key constituents – in just one quarter. Today, Media Relations is recognized as an example of how every HSUS department should operate.

"I firmly believe that Vocus has contributed to our success. With the number of issues we follow, we wouldn't be able to keep our heads above water without it," Querry added. build lists to give to franchisees. We're utilizing it more and more as a team and we're still learning a lot from it."

"We're now looking forward to Vocus' new Social Media offering," says Martha. "In particular, we're looking forward to analyzing the impact our social media strategy is having on the public, and measuring our ROI on the money we're spending in that area. I'm delighted that Vocus is going to be at the forefront of that field as well."