



“Without Vocus, I’d have to hire two extra people. It’s the hub, the crucial part of the PR department. It’s vital.”

– Sherrie Borden, Director of Public Relations

Challenge

Charged with expanding awareness about USP, the small PR team needed to automate and centralize activities such as contact management, list-building and news distribution, as well as build an online newsroom and continuously measure its performance.

Solution

With Vocus' on-demand software for public relations, PR creates targeted, updated lists in minutes. Email Campaigns provides an interactive exchange with reporters and insight into their response to news. Vocus Analytics lets PR measure coverage by program area, type, geographical area and more.

Results

For USP, Vocus brought significant gains in efficiency, adding up to more coverage without additional staff. Plus, management now has a clear understanding of how PR efforts tie to greater awareness about the organization.

US Pharmacopeia Boosts Media Interest without Adding PR Staff, and Proves Results to Management

Customer Profile

US Pharmacopeia (USP), a nonprofit based in Rockville, Maryland, establishes state-of-the-art standards that pharmaceutical manufacturers must meet in order to ensure that consumers receive quality medicines. As the world's most highly recognized and technologically advanced pharmacopeia, USP provides standards for more than 4,000 medicines, dietary supplements and other health care products.

Challenge

As a leader in ensuring the safety of medicines and dietary supplements, USP is the “best-kept secret in your medicine cabinet.” In 2001, USP’s PR team decided it was time to let the secret out and expand awareness in the media about the organization’s leadership in the pharmaceutical industry. USP needed to create unique PR campaigns to meet the objectives of five primary program areas: science, dietary supplements, patient safety, health care information and global initiatives. With a small internal PR team, building, executing and measuring those programs at first seemed daunting.

At the time, the department relied on a book-based directory for the health care market to create lists. Transferring and updating key media contacts drained the team’s time and resources. Additionally, it faxed all its releases, which took considerable time, didn’t provide an electronic record for reporters, and didn’t give reporters a way to respond easily. And most importantly, PR couldn’t effectively measure performance and demonstrate how results tied back to the organization’s mission.

Vocus Public Relations Solution

USP’s PR department launched an initiative to automate and streamline its many time-consuming and labor-intensive tasks, and selected Vocus’ on-demand software as the central component of its strategy. The system offered a database of media contacts, which would allow the team to build targeted lists and distribute news quickly for each of its messaging areas. Plus, it would support the organization’s goals of establishing an online newsroom and measuring its efforts.

To date, the PR team has created 39 unique lists, which it can change easily at any time. With an online database, PR no longer has to enter data manually to add or update media or PR contacts. Each time PR wants to target a niche media group, it builds a new, targeted list. This relieves the team from the burden of time-consuming, manual list-building and updating.

Email Campaigns Empowers PR, Reporters to be More Proactive

To distribute the news, USP now picks its key media targets and sends news directly to journalists with Email Campaigns from Vocus. With this solution, the team knows when reporters received

a release, if they opened the email, how reporters used the release, and whether reporters took related links for more information. When a news clip comes in, they can also tie that back to the initial news release – demonstrating how their efforts enhanced coverage.

In addition to distributing its own news releases, PR staff can also gauge the effectiveness of a release within minutes of distribution. If no key contacts seem interested in the information, PR can follow up with more details or redirect the release to someone else. “We love Email Campaigns,” Borden said. “It’s so efficient and it gives reporters what they need.”

Online News Center Ensures Information Available 24/7

With Online Newsroom from Vocus, USP easily established an online News Center where reporters can find recent press releases, company and program information, and bios on key executives. In light of the fact that journalists increasingly rely on a wide range of Web content to expedite story development, providing such comprehensive information online is essential.

PR maintains the site itself – without having to tap the company’s IT department – so the team can keep information up-to-date. Once PR posts a news release online, the team can track who visited the media center and which releases and information are of most interest. The team can see the number of monthly visits, hits per release, or hits by country, since USP sells internationally. Not only does PR control what is posted, but the system allows reporters to proactively collect information, anytime.

Analytics Provides Key Metrics for PR Team, Management

The key to transforming the PR function was the ability to drill down and truly understand the impact of campaigns with Vocus Analytics. PR quickly knows the effectiveness of its campaigns, enabling the team to adjust strategies early in the game, revise key messaging or augment pitching to boost the response rate.

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In seconds, the PR team can summarize the number of media impressions USP received during a set period of time, as well as information like mindshare, which lets USP compare mentions against its competitors. The organization can also track coverage by positive, negative or neutral, as defined by a third-party analytics provider with which it works. With easy-to-understand, colorful charts, PR can show managers the connection between efforts and coverage, demonstrating the value of the department.

“It shows the PR department is doing what it’s supposed to be doing,” explained Sherrie Borden, director of public relations for USP. “It’s been especially important for programs where PR was the main method of getting the word out. We’re able to show the distribution of clips across the country in key cities and publications.”

The PR team also looks at another set of more detailed reports to analyze its own efforts, and to share with its external PR agency. For example, the team measures the amount of coverage it receives in trade versus consumer publications, or coverage across various program areas, and can set goals and strategies to work toward a more desirable balance. Tracking news center data, the team could see the impact of its efforts – a dramatic increase in the amount of calls it receives from the media.

Results: Small PR Team Jumpstarts Productivity, Results

For USP, using Vocus software has brought significant gains in efficiency, adding up to more coverage without additional staff. The team can build and refine its many lists quickly, share news easily and interactively with reporters, maintain a comprehensive online newsroom, and measure all its efforts for continuous improvement and to demonstrate performance to management. Additionally, all team members work in an online centralized PR management system, which gives them a complete and easily accessible record of all conversations and interaction with journalists. This is especially useful when someone on the team is traveling, something happens after business hours, or when they use a freelancer to help with specific campaigns. Everyone is able to access the same information.



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About Vocus, Inc.

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