

PR for the Initiative Austrian Shoe Business

PR-Concept: “What all Austrians go for”

Entry Summary: The Initiative Austrian Shoe Business is an association with members from the areas shoe sellers, shoe industry, shoe importers/wholesalers and producers of shoe cleaning materials. Membership is voluntary. Goal of the Initiative is to jointly present the Austrian shoe business and increase public awareness.

Statement of the Problem / Opportunity

The Austrian shoe business is characterized by different interest groups which – each one for itself – follow different marketing strategies.

- - Specialist shops-
- - branch networks
- -discounters
- -. industry (mono.stores, outlets)
- - purchasing combines
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The specialist shops not organized in chains suffer under a lack of professional staff and begin to feel the pressures of globalization and market concentration of the large chain stores.

To counter the cost pressures of imports from cheap labour countries, e.g. China, the Austrian shoe industry increasingly goes for niche products and quality shoes.

Austrians spend less money for shoes than in the past

-Shoes are lagging behind other consumption expenditures

Other products/services than shoes are more in the public focus.

Research

In 2006, every Austrian household on average spent 418 Euros for shoes, in 2007 this dropped to 413 Euros. With 41,5 percent the by far largest share of turnover was with ladies shoes. Mens shoes were at 19,7 %, children shoes at 11,9 %. Sport shoes at 13,4 %, bags and suitcases/small leather products 13 %. The total turnover of the Austrian shoe business in 2006 was 1.265

million Euros, in 2007 1.316 million Euros. Shoe sales are dominated by six branch networks which represent 60 % of turnovers and 66 % of sales areas.

The Austrian shoe industry consists of 23 producers who manufactured 40 million pairs of shoes with a value of 610 million Euros in 2006. In 2005 production was at 42 million pairs at a value of 596 million Euros. The shoe industry is heavily export oriented, mainly direction Germany.

Planning

Goal:

- further the interest for the topic "shoes" in the Austrian public
- animate consumers to increased purchases-
- stengthen the public image of the specialized shoe stores

Dialogue groups:

- Primary: Consumers
- - Journalists (fashion, women, life,/lifestyle, local, specialized media) as mediators to the primary target group
- Shoe sellers

Strategy: shoe feelings

- Shoes are sexy, romantic, trendy, elegant, easy-going...
- Shoes leave nobody untouched
- To raise interest in buying and trading shoes the PR campaign is directed towards emotions connected with shoes.

Process:

Phase 1: Research and Conception (April to June 2007)

Phase 2: Client coordination, planning of detailed tools and events (Jul7 2007)

Phase 3: Execution of the PR-program (August 2007- December 2009)

Execution

1. Your show, please: activities for the specialized shoe trade

- a) Attractive presentation of the shoe sales personnel: job profile "shoe salesman/woman" in Dr. Wailands Karrierepool , Kronen-Zeitung, Austrias by far largest daily (June 6, 2008)
- b) Presentation of the strength of specialized stores, e.g. in the area of children shoes, which demand special consulting, by e.g. organizing a broadcast on "healthy children shoes" by the "Radio Doctor" in "Oesterreich 1" nationwide radio. Augmented by media information for specialized and health media in September 2007.

- c) Homepage: www.gesundekinderschuhe.at as information platform for parents on healthy shoes.

2. ShoEmotion: making shoes popular

a) **The Austrian Shoe study: an annual** “institution” generating topics interesting for journalists around the shoe. The goal is broad reporting in all Austrian media about the study results – and thus the topic “shoe” in general.
- Shoe study 2007: “The language of shoes” carried out by Karmasin Motivation Research deals with the question what shoes tell us about their owners – according to the idea “show me your shoe and I will tell you who you are (published in February 2008)

Shoe study 2009: “The Austrians and their shoes”, by Karmasin Motivation Research and the Austrian Gallup Institute deals with the Austrian’s shoe conscience and the question which emotions are connected with certain types of shoes (published in March 2009)

b) **Mr. Shoe/ Mrs Shoe:** An expert jury selected prominent shoe-wearers for the first time in 2008 that excel by their “understanding of shoes” and their fashionable taste. The award ceremony is planned for March 2009.

c) **Best shoed/worst shoed list:** in analogy of the legendary Blackwell best/worst dressed list“.; List in planning stage.

d) **What Austrian politicians stand on:** organization of a photo-story in the “Kurier” (one of Austria’s leading dailies) about shoes of domestic politicians; together with comments of the prominent shoes by fashion experts of the domestic shoe business (published January 27,2008)

e) **Charity shoe auction on e-bay:** Stage shoes of prominent artists (opera diva Anna Netrebko, actress Nina Hoss, actor Tobias Moretti) in January 2008 with the proceeds going to the SOS children villages. Supporting media work: two press releases (January, April 2008)

f) **Your shoe booklet:** a small handy mini-brochure with funny and interesting information around the shoe (shoe production, how to judge quality, treatment, shoes and health, types of shoes and what they tell you about their owner, etc) as communication tool for the shoe seller and his clients (to be distributed in shoe cartons, with direct mails, as internet download) to be published in fall 2009-04-04

g) **The shoe-day:** a mega shoe-business event in all Austrian counties providing a stage for the shoe and everything connected to it. In planning stage

Envisaged program parts:

Shoe parades in all county capitals

The largest shoe in the world (world record trial, entry in the Guinness book of records)

Supporting marketing/sales activities of the sales organizations (raffles, special discounts, etc)

Supporting media work aiming at a maximum of editorial reporting

Press release announcing event

Event invitations for journalists

Release on world record trial

Internet platform for all participating staff/shops/companies/visitors

Budget: € 130.00.- annually (not including shoe day)

Campaign Outcomes / Monitoring and Evaluation

€260.000 advertising value

The PR campaign was successful above average. More than 60 reports in print media, radio, and TV put shoes and the Austrian shoe business more into the focus of public attention. The execution of the PR concept resulted in media reports representing 269.000 Euros in 2008 alone – twice the budget invested.

On top of this were countless reports in online media which for methodological reasons could not be included in the advertising value accounting, but are of particular importance for reaching especially young target groups.

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