

CASE STUDY Crisis Management Campaign



Countering the effects of foot and mouth

CLIENT

Terra Nova Equipment Ltd is the only UK manufacturer of tents. The Terra Nova range is used by leading explorers. The company also owns the Wild Country tent brand and Extremities brand of clothing accessories..

OBJECTIVE

In February 2001 the foot and mouth epidemic began and virtually overnight public rights of way were closed by local authorities across the UK. This closure had an immediate adverse effect on outdoor retailers and Terra Nova Equipment began to see forward orders cancelled by customers. By April, orders were down by 40 per cent. Compensation had been promised to certain parts of the tourism industry but no help had been offered to affected manufacturers.

The primary objective was to minimise the impact of the countryside access issue on sales. The secondary objective was to support the dealer network and ensure that the relatively new and young management team at Terra Nova Equipment was positioned as proactive and progressive in the face of adversity.

IMPLEMENTATION

An action plan was created focussing on sales promotions through retailers, media relations and parliamentary lobbying.

Environment Minister Michael Meacher was approached with a plea to improve access to the countryside. Cicada also wrote to MPs to put forward the case of British manufacturing. Following this the impending election was capitalised on by devising a comparative poll of the replies received from the three major parties. Cicada publicised these results.

Cicada issued a press release on the "top ten backpacking tips" in time for the May Bank Holiday. A media campaign was also timed to coincide with National Camping Week, appealing for local authorities to open public rights of way.

Cicada co-ordinated an initiative to invite local, trade and specialist consumer journalists to visit the factory to see how the company was diversifying to tackle the effects of the access crisis.

Cicada also ensured that Terra Nova's dealers were kept up to date with the foot and mouth situation on a daily basis and relayed information to them about the company's diversification tactics.

A competition in conjunction with leading adventure travel company Exodus for the buyers of Terra Nova-branded tents to win a trip to the Himalayas was publicised by Cicada. Cicada also publicised a promotion organised in conjunction with P&O Ferries for the buyers of Wild Country-branded tents for free ferry travel to France and Ireland encouraging people who can't camp in the UK to go abroad.

RESULTS

Although sales had been hit hard by foot and mouth, it was felt that the figures would have been much worse had this campaign not been undertaken. All the retailers contacted gave positive feedback and their support was gained with sales having stabilised. Replies were received from letters sent to MPs with practical advice and updates. The media were very impressed with the company's willingness to take a stance and publicise the issues surrounding foot and mouth. Finally, the new management team at Terra Nova has gained credibility internally.