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In-house PR Team of the Year 2009

March 05 2009

Winner

Roll International

When a three-person in-house staff can put a category on the map, as Roll International's internal PR team did with the pomegranate juice sector and POM Wonderful, it sets a high bar for all future endeavors. Half a decade later, having quadrupled in size, the team at the eclectic brand holding company has become an awareness-building powerhouse for a variety of brands that are exported to 42 countries.

Prior to 2005, Teleflora had minimal consumer notoriety. Today, it is the number-one floral wire service in the US. Since Roll's acquisition of FIJI in 2004, the PR team has played a key role in the business' more than 300% growth into the top imported water brand in the world. Paramount Farms has become the world's largest vertically integrated grower, processor, and marketer of almonds and pistachios.

“Strong results managing a robust set of brands with a fairly small staff,” noted one judge. “What they've done with POM is truly spectacular.”

Over a recent 52-week period, the corporate communications team garnered 2,611 placements. Beyond that, the staff secured a significant presence at events including meetings of both the American Dietetic and Heart Associations, as well as both US political parties' national conventions.

In the team's ongoing campaign to create a global presence, it launched PR initiatives in China, India, Mexico, Australia, Japan, the UK, and Spain, with efforts being prepared for several other European nations.

On the social media front, the team created blogs, targeted bloggers as a key element of media outreach, boosted its reliance on YouTube and MySpace to help extend its message, and unveiled Web sites like pistachiohealth.com and FijiGreen.com.

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Teamwork has also become a staple of PR efforts. Effective use of outside agencies has helped projects flourish. On an internal basis, the in-house communicators work with a multitude of departments in innovative ways. For example, as health is such a vital element in many of Roll's efforts, the PR team works closely with the director of medical research to determine meaningful, relevant research projects that will help grow all brands.

Joint efforts with the HR department (to develop recruiting materials and other employee initiatives) and the company's owner (to design and launch a corporate Web site) round out the broad reach the in-house PR team has within the company.

One judge cited the team's "thorough approach to all its brands," while another complimented its particular efforts for POM, saying, "The Roll [team] has done an impressive job putting pomegranates and their nutritional and culinary value on the map."