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Organization names:	Argyle Communications
Client organization:	GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare
Award Category:	Division A: Media Relations
Title of Entry:	Breathe Right® Nasal Strips Sleep Pod Hotel Media Tour
Project time period:	October 2013

ENTRY SUMMARY

In October 2013, Argyle Communications designed and implemented a strategic media relations program to increase awareness and understanding of the benefit of using Breathe Right® nasal strips to relieve night-time nasal congestion, resulting in a better night's sleep. The program was anchored by the novel concept of a six-unit pod hotel, fuelled by fresh research on Canadians' sleep habits, and customized to maximize interest with local media outlets in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. The results included broad print, online and broadcast coverage that was well-branded, locally relevant, and reached a total audience of more than 24 million Canadians in just one month.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

In October 2013, the GSK Consumer Healthcare brand manager for Breathe Right® nasal strips tasked Argyle Communications and its other partners with developing and implementing an integrated strategy to increase awareness of Breathe Right nasal strips' ability to relieve night-time nasal congestion and ultimately drive trial among target consumers. The team saw an opportunity to grow the brand by focusing not just on the direct benefit of the product (i.e., relieving congestion) but the larger secondary benefit of a better night's sleep. The result was a novel concept that involved setting up a "pod hotel" – six individual sleeping pods that would be assembled in public spaces for one-week periods in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto. Members of the public were invited to reserve 20-minute nap times in the pods and try a Breathe Right nasal strip. Argyle designed a comprehensive media relations program to engage influential journalists, using a potent combination of the sleep pods, the product, consumer research and third-party expertise to secure an outstanding quality and quantity of branded coverage in all target media markets.

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

The "bull's-eye": Adults aged 25-54 who were looking to solve night-time nasal congestion that affected their sleep. The target consumer used a toolbox of solutions to deal with the problem, including cough-cold, allergy, medicated and non-medicated products. **The imperative:** Make Breathe Right part of this toolbox. **The insight:** The target consumer had a lack of product familiarity and/or did not associate it with sleep. The key was establishing this familiarity and connection.

Through brand team meetings, and a news and social media review, Argyle identified a number of considerations that would influence program success, including:

- ◆ **A crowded discussion on the topic of sleep. Analysis:** In much of 2013, sleep was a popular topic in both news and social media. Many consumer brands were also engaging consumers on the topic of sleep, with new products designed to improve sleep quality or create a better sleep environment. **Insight:** Argyle saw a need for a "new" angle that would differentiate our campaign from others already in the market to cut through the clutter and gain traction. With October being Healthy Workplace Month, the team decided to focus on the link between **sleep and workplace wellness** to capitalize on story opportunities related to the national health promotion campaign theme.
- ◆ **Limited understanding of product benefits: Analysis:** While the GSK/Argyle team wanted to focus on sleep quality, research suggested this product benefit was poorly understood by the market. Breathe Right

nasal strips are more commonly recognized as a way to reduce snoring and are used frequently by athletes to improve breathing during training and events. **Insight:** The Argyle team saw a “way in” to the discussion about sleep by taking advantage of the program timing on the cusp of cold and flu season. Argyle’s key messages would tap into the collective irritation people feel when they are congested at night, positioning the strips as an ideal, drug-free solution that could be used along with medications.

- ◆ **Spokesperson endorsement linked to increased product sales:** **Analysis:** During a previous media relations program for the same product, Argyle had employed an alternative health professional, Bryce Wylde, as a third-party brand spokesperson. The team noted a clear correlation between these interviews and sales. **Insight:** The use of credible, recognizable spokespeople would help to engage audiences and encourage the desired action – i.e., product purchase and trial.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Communications Goals	Program Objectives
Earn national share of voice for Breathe Right within the news coverage on sleep as part of a strategy to improve sleep quality and therefore work productivity.	Secure a national feature story reporting on Breathe Right-branded research into the prevalence of sleep challenges, ideally with a syndicated columnist or newswire reporter to enable publication across Canada. <i>Total audience reach objective of 12 million impressions.</i>
Drive local-market awareness of Breathe Right in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto via branded media coverage of the pod hotels.	Secure one major print and broadcast news story per local market. Secure two spokesperson interviews per local market. Secure media coverage in English and French news outlets.
Position Breathe Right nasal strips as an ideal solution for relieving night-time nasal congestion and improving sleep quality.	Ensure media coverage included: at least one key message about sleep health (100 per cent of stories); one spokesperson quote (80 per cent); and one direct brand mention (80 per cent), with the third objective being the most critical.

PLANNING

- ◆ **Sleep pod hotels in major cities:** To dramatize the importance of sleep and connect it to the Breathe Right brand, GSK’s all-agency team developed and promoted attention-getting Breathe Right “sleep pod hotels” in high-traffic locations in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. Consumers could “book” their time in the pods online or drop by for a nap pending availability, and the unusual sight would spawn many images in both news and social media.
- ◆ **A unique local media experience:** We would capitalize on the presence of sleep pod hotels in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto to drive local media interest and have some fun with reporters. The pods had a high novelty factor, as most people had never seen one before, let alone slept in one. We personally invited reporters to visit the pods and anticipated that the fun factor of the experience would lead to branded media coverage.
- ◆ **New research and fresh voices on timely sleep topics.** To expand and extend coverage, we tied the campaign to Healthy Workplace Month and commissioned fresh research into how sleep affected Canadians’ ability to function at work, supplemented with expert spokespeople. We aimed to uncover surprising facts about how poor quality sleep resulted in loss of productivity and absenteeism, and what trade-offs Canadians would accept for better sleep.

EXECUTION

- 1. National advance feature story.** In an increasingly competitive news environment, Argyle selected a key reporter interested in seeing the survey research in advance of its wide release. We identified Misty Harris, consumer trends, social science and demographics reporter for the national *Postmedia* print and online network, and offered her an exclusive first look at the research.
- 2. Customized local-market media materials and outreach.** Argyle prepared a national news release and survey data summary, and customized media invitations for the pod hotels in Montreal, Ottawa and Toronto that included detailed information about hours of operation, spokesperson availability and media nap times. The team conducted national media outreach to support the survey data release and contacted all local media outlets in advance of the pod hotel's arrival to ensure key reporters and outlets were aware of the pods' arrival and could book interviews for the week when the hotel was live.
- 3. Expert spokespeople.** Argyle worked with two expert spokespeople to address the health/wellness and workplace productivity story angles separately – and effectively. Alternative health expert Bryce Wyldie would speak to the importance of sleep when recovering from illness and offer tips for improving sleep (including the use of Breathe Right nasal strips). Executive coach Sophie Lamarche would speak to the impact of sleep on workplace wellness and productivity, and offer tips for improving performance at work, noting the impact of sleep on career success.

BUDGET: The project budget was set at \$114,000 including program planning and management, identification and training of two third-party spokespeople, spokesperson fees, omnibus survey question development, survey implementation, survey results analysis, developing media materials, conducting national and local-market media relations, digital outreach to select journalists, travel to out-of-town pod hotel locations, purchase of broadcast media clips and the production of a final report.

Challenge/Restraint	Solution
Competition from bigger breaking local news	Unfortunately, the Montreal media day coincided with the death of legendary local businessman Paul Desmarais. Local journalists were understandably preoccupied with the sad news and declined invitations to the pod hotel. To mitigate this challenge, Argyle extended media availability on an ad hoc basis for the remainder of the week.
Difficulty in scheduling media visits to the pod hotel	Since the sleep pod hotel schedule was optimized for foot traffic and passers-by at key times of day, there was limited availability for early-morning TV broadcasts. Argyle changed its plans swiftly, opening the pod hotel early on select days, and also by transporting a pod to in-studio interviews when required.

RESULTS

Objective	Results
Reach: National feature news story reporting on the Breathe Right sleep research. Target: 12 million impressions.	Argyle secured an advance feature story opportunity with <i>Postmedia</i> . The story was published online at <i>Canada.com</i> , and appeared online and in select print editions of eight daily newspapers across Canada. Total audience impressions - 24,157,010.
Local awareness: Pod hotel coverage in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. One print + one broadcast story per city; two spokesperson interviews per city.	Argyle facilitated 14 interviews for the campaign spokespeople, resulting in 25 secured stories . An additional 11 stories were secured, but did not include a spokesperson interview. The sleep pod hotel was featured on eight local television stations , including an in-studio sleep pod and an on-site live broadcast .
Branded coverage: Position the strips as an ideal solution for relieving night-time nasal congestion and improving sleep by breathing better.	98 per cent of coverage including at least one key message. A spokesperson quote was included in 71 per cent of all media coverage, both slightly below our admittedly aggressive goals. Most significant of all, however, media coverage was heavily branded with 96 per cent of coverage including a branded product mention – far in excess of our goal or the client's expectations.

