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Positive Results Case Study



College Goal Sunday: A 60% Increase While Decreasing Marketing Costs

Problem

College Goal Sunday, an annual event held at sites around the state, helps college-bound high school seniors and their families apply for financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). With such a young target audience, the event's leadership team needed major new impetus from an agency. "We had used the same PR firm since the inception of College Goal Sunday and we, as a leadership team, felt like we would like to bring a new look and a fresh approach into College Goal Sunday and bring it into the 21st Century," said College Goal Sunday Co-Chair Jacki Switzer.

Adding to the challenges was the fact that this improved approach needed to be implemented on a smaller, more cost-efficient budget.

Solution

Energizing the image of College Goal Sunday in the eyes of its youthful audience was crucial in the event's transformation. "One of the biggest changes and one of the most impressive changes, actually, was the printed materials that MillerWhite came up with," Switzer said. "A kind of a new logo, 'Kick Off Your Future,' bright colors, things that enticed our target population. We had extremely good feedback about the printed materials, the brochures, the flyers, the things that MillerWhite created for us."

Media relations, public relations and interactive media are other vehicles which have been utilized in reaching students and their families. Publicizing College Goal Sunday through free public service announcements statewide takes advantage of the community-benefit element of the event. "Electronically, MillerWhite sent out the PSA's to the media, and in the past that had been done via paper which was an extreme expense in copying and postage and distribution," Switzer said. A "My Space" page also was created for the event, targeting the young audience's use of interactive media.

Results

"Some of the results that we have seen from the 2007 campaign, first of all was the reduction in cost," Switzer said. "Going to a new PR firm, in using MillerWhite, we were able to reduce the cost which had been a directive from our leadership team."

"The second thing that we noticed, we increased our online filing of the FAFSA which was a directive of the Department of Education, over 60%. And we were very excited about that. Going forward in the future, that's what we're going to be looking at, really increasing the ability for folks to file that FAFSA online."