

BP participates in Early Adopter Pilot Program of PR Newswire's New Measurement Service, MediaSense

OVERVIEW

BP is one of the world's largest energy companies, providing its customers with fuel for transportation, energy for heat and light, retail services and petrochemicals products for everyday items. With operations in 100 countries, BP's global communications group is tasked with supporting the company's overall business objectives through proactive media relations programs as well as planning and implementing strategic communications programs.

BP owns several different brands including BP, Aral, Amoco, ARCO, and Castrol. As director of corporate communications, Sarah Howell is part of a team of US media experts who oversee external communications for BP's U.S. businesses. With various types of competitors to each brand around the world, the BP team work to create compelling messages that will resonate above those of their competitors'. Each message is designed to position BP as a world leader in the energy industry.

CHALLENGE

Although BP has used measurement services in the past, they proved to be too cost-prohibitive and time-consuming to maintain. Eventually BP brought the measurement functionality in-house, and relies on its network of professionals around the country to provide a regular update and analysis of the media coverage BP has garnered.

According to Sarah, "measuring our efforts has always been an important part of our communications programs because we rely on the market sector and press intelligence to help us understand if we are on target with our messages."

SOLUTION

When approached by PR Newswire to participate in the Early Adopter pilot program for MediaSense, Sarah agreed because she was "intrigued by how PR Newswire uses technology to measure coverage and was interested in seeing how the PR Newswire service compared to others."

Although Sarah was not interested in tracking a particular campaign, she was interested in understanding how the coverage BP received on specific issues compared to that of their competitors.

MediaSense provides a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the media coverage an organization receives. Three reports are delivered on a quarterly basis, every 30 days and contain an evaluation of media coverage throughout that time period based upon several measures. Quantitative criteria include volume of coverage and coverage by media type. Qualitative measures include an evaluation of each article's tone (positive, negative, neutral), the presence of key corporate messages, the overall quality of coverage based upon an article's length, placement, publication type and tone, and the equivalent ad value. All quantitative measurements are evaluated based upon a comparison to a company's key competitors, while qualitative reports offer an unbiased assessment of how a company is portrayed in the press.

The analysis is delivered in reports that consist of charts and graphs illustrating each aspect that has been measured and that can be easily incorporated into Microsoft Word or Powerpoint and shared among colleagues.

Sarah liked the different areas of coverage the service measured, “with flexible criteria on how the coverage is reported – opportunities to view, ad value, and tonality to name a few.”

RESULTS

At the end of the pilot, Sarah was very pleased with the results she saw from MediaSense in that “it provided a sense of how our messages were standing out against our competitors. I used the pilot service to take a temperature of how these issues are covered in the industry.”

“As always PR Newswire took great pains to answer questions pertinent to my measurement needs and to tweak the system so I would get the most reliable analysis from the pilot.”