



Dutch Umbrella

Public Relations Plan

September 30, 2008

Account Team:

Jade Barnes, Staff Member

Reilly Fies, Staff Member

Olivia Ragni, Staff Member

Jessica Lawlor, Account Executive

Crystal Wang, Assistant Firm Director

Jaime Scofield, Firm Director

Executive Summary

PRowl Public Relations will serve as the public relations consultant for Dutch Umbrella. The primary goal for this campaign is to promote Dutch Umbrella to their dual audience: the public, specifically residents of Philadelphia over the age of 18, and potential advertisers within the Philadelphia area.

Dutch Umbrella's most powerful advocate is the public. The company relies on them to attract local businesses to get involved with Dutch Umbrella. Our business goals are to increase awareness about Dutch Umbrella in Philadelphia and to brand the company as a unique, sustainable business.

After conducting a situational analysis, we found that Dutch Umbrella is the only umbrella-sharing business in the Philadelphia area. However, other forms of sharing companies do exist within the city. PhillyCarShare and Zipcar are two car-sharing companies that allow customers to use a car and then return it to a reserved parking spot when they are finished for an affordable fee.

To reach our goals, we will use guerrilla marketing tactics and media relations. The use of guerrilla marketing techniques will generate a buzz about the company. Media relations will include press releases and pitch letters to inform and create awareness of the Dutch Umbrella brand. It will also include media alerts for Dutch Umbrella events, as well as promotional events we have specified below. We will also re-design Dutch Umbrella's media kit to better represent the brand.

Table of Contents

- I. Background Information
- II. Situational Analysis
- III. Research
- IV. Audiences
- V. Business Goals
- VI. Communication Objectives
- VII. Strategy
- VIII. Tactics
- IX. Evaluation
- X. Timeline
- XI. Supplemental Information

I. Background Information

Dutch Umbrella is an umbrella-sharing system that started in the Fairmount section of Philadelphia in April 2007. Umbrella-sharing can be defined as “a system for the shared public use of umbrellas comprised of pick-up and drop-off locations within a defined urban area” as well as, “a community supported effort to encourage citywide sharing, enabling the convenience of any-time umbrellas,” according to Dutch Umbrella’s website.

Joe Carlson, co-founder of Dutch Umbrella was bartending in Fairmount and noticed many patrons were leaving their umbrellas at the bar, or had forgotten an umbrella and were left unprotected in the rain. Carlson recognized the need for a sharing-system with stationary pick-up and drop-off areas. He mentioned this idea to a customer, to which the customer responded, “You mean like the bicycles in Amsterdam?” Carlson noted that his idea was similar to the bike-sharing system in the Netherlands and aptly named the company “Dutch Umbrella.”

After being laid-off from her job, co-founder Karen Rostmeyer stepped in to help Carlson find a way to profit from his idea. They began to work on a business plan for their new company. Businesses pay \$50 a month to house a RainDrop, which is a bin with about a dozen umbrellas. They came up with the idea of offering businesses the chance to advertise on their umbrellas for \$300 a month. Businesses that advertise are promoted on Dutch Umbrella’s website and are included in events hosted by Dutch Umbrella. Each umbrella is white with eight bold black advertisements. They attract business-owners by explaining print advertisements are no longer as effective as they once were. Newspapers get thrown away at the end of each day and readers are accustomed to ignoring or passing over advertisements. These umbrellas are sustainable, and are re-used each time it rains.

Patrons can enter a business that houses a RainDrop when it is raining, pick up an umbrella, use it and then drop it off at the same or a different RainDrop location when finished. Although the public sometimes abuses the honor system, Dutch Umbrella has found that most umbrellas are eventually returned.

Dutch Umbrella holds an event each time they enter a new neighborhood. They recently hosted a very successful event in Old City, “The Old City Tasting Stroll.” Dutch Umbrella partnered with Philadelphia Trolley Works and invited the public to hop on and off the trolley, which took patrons on a food tasting tour where RainDrops are found. They encouraged participants to get their Dutch Umbrella passport stamped at each destination to receive discounts.

PRowl Public Relations was contacted by Dutch Umbrella to help aid them in gaining exposure in the Philadelphia market. Dutch Umbrella would like to stress the importance of sharing in today’s self-absorbed society.

II. Situational Analysis

After the completion of our situational analysis, we have found that Dutch Umbrella is the only umbrella-sharing company in Philadelphia. While other companies like PhillyCarShare and ZipCar embrace the same ideals of sharing as Dutch Umbrella, no other business focuses on umbrellas.

We did find a similar experiment in Park Slope, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, NY where small business owners rallied together and purchased 400 yellow umbrellas that say, "Please enjoy this community umbrella and return it to a participating local merchant." This became part of Park Slope Civic Council's "Buy in Brooklyn" campaign, to keep business in the area. Store owners have similar bins like RainDrops for customers to house the umbrellas. They have held events, such as an extended hours shopping night in December, but nothing similar to Dutch Umbrella's tasting tour.

III. Research

In preparation for this campaign, we have compiled a list of blogs, newsletters and publications focusing on the topics of small businesses and sustainable businesses. (*For a complete list of the blogs and publications, see Supplements.*)

IV. Audiences

Dutch Umbrella has a dual audience: Philadelphia residents over the age of 18, and potential advertisers.

1. **Philadelphia Residents over the Age of 18:** Dutch Umbrella recognizes that the public needs to take the position of advocates for Dutch Umbrella.
2. **Potential Advertisers:** Dutch Umbrella strives to attract other businesses and companies to advertise with Dutch Umbrella.

V. Business Goals

The business goals of PRowl Public Relations' campaign are as follows:

- To increase awareness and promote Dutch Umbrella in Philadelphia.
- To reach out to the media in hopes of gaining coverage for Dutch Umbrella in Philadelphia media, business publications, sustainable business publications and blogs.
- To refocus the brand and image of Dutch Umbrella to better represent the company, through creating a media kit that represents the company.

VI. Communication Objectives

Our objectives in this campaign are as follows:

- To increase awareness of Dutch Umbrella's proactive ideas by explaining the importance of sharing and sustainability to Philadelphians over the age of 18.
- To increase use of Dutch Umbrella's umbrellas and maintain positive relationships with advertisers and businesses who house RainDrops.

VII. Strategy

Our strategy is to position Dutch Umbrella as a unique and sustainable business, up and coming in the Philadelphia area. The following tactics will be implemented as part of our strategy.

VIII. Tactics

We will use guerrilla marketing in addition to media relations as tools to reach our goals and objectives.

The activities and events include:

- Guerrilla Marketing
 - With approval, the client will purchase cocktail parasols and attach a note to them with Dutch Umbrella's website information. We will pass these out in addition to fliers at the First Friday event and when we do other promotional work. We will utilize the cocktail parasols as a creative representation of the real umbrellas.
 - With the permission of the client, account members will strategically leave open umbrellas in various parks and other high-traffic public places within the city on sunny days to attract attention. Attached will include a creative note with a list of RainDrop locations where the umbrellas can be returned. This will generate excitement, while also increasing public awareness about the company.
 - Upon Dutch Umbrella's approval, we will purchase rain-gear and account members will dress in rain-gear (rain coats, rain boots, etc.) and walk down busy city streets on sunny days holding umbrellas and passing out promotional information about Dutch Umbrella. We will pass out cocktail parasols and fliers.

- Account members will participate in a night of active outreach at First Friday on November 7, Old City's popular, highly attended event. We will hand out promotional materials such as cocktail parasols and fliers.

Re-focusing the image of Dutch Umbrella will include:

- Portfolio/Media Kit
 - Dutch Umbrella has expressed interest in re-focusing their media kit to be more consistent with their overall image. The company's media kit and information portfolio has not been updated since it was first created in 2007. Thus, we would like to create a new print media kit, as well as an electronic media kit, representative of Dutch Umbrella. Since the company represents a sustainable company, a "greener" portfolio would be ideal. Our creative designer, Keith Flanagan will work with Dutch Umbrella's materials to help achieve the desired results.

Media Relations will include:

- Focusing on increasing Dutch Umbrella's television coverage. Below are a few key outlets that we would like to reach out to when having an event and for a feature story about Dutch Umbrella as a sustainable business:
 - The 10 Show
 - 6 ABC News
 - NBC 10 WCAU News
 - Fox 29 News
 - CBS 3 News
 - Dig Philly TV
- Pitching print and electronic businesses, as well as industry specific publications to promote the growing business aspect of Dutch Umbrella.
 - Specific outlets include publications, which focus on sustainability and green issues, as well as small businesses. (*For a complete list of blogs and publications, see Supplements.*)

IX. Evaluation

The effectiveness and success of our campaign will be measured by the media coverage Dutch Umbrella receives. Throughout the semester, we will track coverage of press clippings, blog entries and television mentions.

We will call all Dutch Umbrella businesses that house RainDrops and ask them if there was an increase in people coming into their business with umbrellas at the beginning and end of every month.

We will keep track of the amount of fliers and cocktail parasols distributed to determine how many people were informed about the company.

We will also administer a survey to Philadelphians over the age of 18 at the beginning and end of the campaign to determine the change of awareness in our target audiences and to determine their opinions about Dutch Umbrella.

X. Timeline

October 1-14

- Create and distribute awareness survey.
- Finalize Philadelphia media list and list of business related blogs.
- Create press release to send to business publications and blogs.
- Create note that will be attached to umbrellas that will be left in parks or other high traffic areas on a rainy days.
- Create note that will be attached to cocktail parasols that will be passed out at promotional events.
- Obtain rain gear.

October 15-31

- Create flier that will be passed out at all promotional events.
- Pitch Dutch Umbrella to business related blogs and publications.
- Create media list of television outlets.
- Pitch Dutch Umbrella as a feature story to television outlets.
- Leave umbrellas in parks and other high traffic areas on sunny days.
- Begin working on designing Dutch Umbrella's new press kit.

November 1-14

- Execute First Friday event.
- Leave umbrellas in parks and other high traffic areas on sunny days.
- Walk through busy city streets in rain gear holding umbrellas on a sunny day passing out promotional information.
- Continue working on Dutch Umbrella's press kit.

November 14- December 4

- Leave umbrellas in parks and other high traffic areas on sunny days.
- Walk through busy city streets in rain gear holding Dutch umbrellas on a sunny day.
- Complete Dutch Umbrella's press kit.
- Create awareness survey.
- Distribute and evaluate awareness survey.

December 5

- End of contract period.
- Start evaluation of successfulness of the campaign.

XI. Supplements

Blogs/Newsletters:

- Blogbusinessworld.blogspot.com
- Smallbiztrends.com
- Philly.com business blogs
 - [Phillyinc](http://Phillyinc.com)
 - [Phillydeals](http://Phillydeals.com)
- Phillyfuture.com
- Innovationphiladelphia.com
 - They write on their website (kind of like little feature articles)
 - They also have a blog section
- Phillymag.com
 - Online newsletter
- Philly.com
 - Online newsletter
- Greater Philadelphia Business
 - Gp-biz.com
- Philadelphia Weekly
 - Online newsletters, discussions
- www.futureofbusiness.info
- New York Times
 - Blogs
 - [Business of Green](http://BusinessofGreen.com)