

PRWeek

Performance Bicycle invests in PR and social with Formula hire

Alexandra Bruell April 04 2011

CHAPEL HILL, NC: Performance Bicycle hired Formula as its AOR with plans to cycle into the national and social media scene with aggressive growth. The partnership is in line with the company's decision to shift marketing dollars from traditional direct to PR and online efforts, said CMO Cindy Marshall.

Following a competitive review, the firm snagged the bid for a one-year, low-six-figure budget contract. Scope of work includes traditional PR and social media.

She explained that the company has plans to open up to 20 stores per year, compared to only 12 last year. The growth follows a rebrand two years ago toward the development of a less intimidating retail concept.

"As we've relaunched our brand and are building out a future for the business, we thought it was time to hire an agency that has more experience, not only in the sports marketing arena but with larger, top of mind household names," she said. "Our goal is to continue to be top of mind for anybody and everybody who wants to ride a bike."

The team will work to expand the PR focus and brand exposure from cycling outlets and grand openings to national outlets and chain-wide efforts, build grassroots community plans for each store to adopt, and expand social marketing company-wide.

She explained that the marketing budget is shifting from traditional direct mail, radio, and ROP to online activities such as social media, SEO, and digital advertising to drive retail traffic and local and national buzz.

For example, one of the first initiatives that Formula will work on with the brand's media agency is a recycling-themed effort for National Bike Month. It's promoting the effort via online banners, paid search, and social media, a shift from its traditional direct marketing approach during the month.

The agency is also currently working to promote the store's six grand openings this month through blogger and social media outreach and monitoring.

Previously, the company had worked with Traffic PRM, which was not invited to participate in the review.

"They did a good job in getting good press and traction, but now we're at the next stage in life where we need to turn up the dials and build on social media," said Marshall.

This year, Performance expects to grow to over 100 stores around the country.