

## Battery Controlled - Protecting Kids from a Hidden Danger

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FleishmanHillard and Energizer, Jan 1,2013

**Summary:** 2013 Silver Anvil Award Winner — Issues Management — Business

Growing demand for slimmer electronics drives use of the coin-sized button batteries that power them –increasing the risk to young children. When swallowed, these batteries can lodge in a child’s esophagus and burn through the tissue in just two hours – leading to serious injury or death. Energizer partnered with Safe Kids Worldwide to launch *The Battery Controlled*, raising awareness and inspiring action among parents and physicians through compelling materials, traditional and social media, mom bloggers and community outreach. In just six months, the campaign stimulated a significant shift in parental concern and attitudes.

Issues management includes programs undertaken to deal with issues that could extraordinarily affect ongoing business strategy.

### **Full Text: SITUATION ANALYSIS**

Two hundred X-rays. Thirty surgeries. Eight months in the pediatric ICU. Four inches of esophagus removed. **A little boy’s life changed by one preventable event.**

Emmett Rauch swallowed a coin lithium button battery from a remote control that had fallen within his reach. The battery stayed lodged in his esophagus for three days, silently destroying tissue without creating obvious symptoms. While he now faces lifelong health challenges, Emmett is winning his fight. Others have not been as lucky.

Growing demand for slimmer electronics drives growth in use of the button batteries that power them – increasing the risk to young children. Serious injuries are rising, having quadrupled in just five years (2006-2010). Eleven children have died.

Most often, children find the batteries in thin remote controls and other devices that have unsecured battery compartments. Once swallowed, a coin-sized button battery can lodge in a child’s esophagus and start burning immediately, causing serious injury in just two hours. Because breathing continues normally and symptoms mimic common illnesses, the condition can go undiagnosed for days – leading to devastating outcomes.

As the category leader, Energizer knew it could play an important role in keeping kids safe. With a strong corporate commitment to “Do the Right Thing,” Energizer partnered with child safety organization Safe Kids Worldwide to launch *The Battery Controlled*, raising awareness of the risk and inspiring action among parents and physicians. Energizer also demonstrated its leadership on the issue. In just six months, the resulting campaign stimulated a significant shift in parental concern and attitudes.

### **RESEARCH**

Children six and younger are at greatest risk of serious injury from button battery ingestion, according to the National Capital Poison Center. Therefore, the primary audiences for the campaign included parents, grandparents and caregivers of children in this age group.

Research among Fleishman-Hillard's proprietary database of parents revealed they are most aware and concerned about safety risks they can see: fire, electrocution and drowning. Button batteries are hidden inside devices, representing a serious yet unseen risk. Energizer's campaign needed to make this invisible risk visible. A review of battery-ingestion news coverage confirmed this insight, with parents repeatedly echoing a heart-wrenching regret: "I wish I had known."

Secondary campaign audiences were medical professionals, health and safety advocates, parenting groups and other influencers. Focus groups with physicians and discussions with child safety organizations showed how important it would be to demonstrate the prevalence of the devices and the growing trend in incidents. Doing so would help key audiences recognize the urgency of the issue and the need to share information about the threat.

Fleishman-Hillard also conducted focus groups with parents, caregivers and physicians to help define the campaign's theme, call to action and approach. Most important, Fleishman-Hillard conducted an online survey of parents at the start of the program to benchmark awareness and attitudes of this issue. A follow-up survey was conducted again six months after launch to measure impact.

## PLANNING

Focus groups with pediatricians revealed they would not proactively raise the issue of button battery ingestion to parents; the frequency of incidents is too low compared to other topics they must address. While educating pediatricians on diagnosis and treatment remains essential, this insight led the campaign to focus on reaching parents directly to stop ingestions before they happen.

Research also informed the campaign theme. *The Battery Controlled* tested well compared to other options because it communicated adults are empowered to keep kids safe by controlling batteries and battery-controlled devices.

Our resulting strategic approach was three-fold:

- **Craft a powerful story** through emotional video, personal stories and helpful informational tools
- **Engage partners** led by Safe Kids Worldwide, a leader in child injury prevention with a trusted voice, expertise, extensive network of local chapters and strong relationships with other leading health and safety organizations
- **Generate a groundswell of support** to spread the call to action through news and social media, bloggers and other partners, driving audiences to campaign resources

Supported by focus group and research findings noted above, the campaign took a serious, direct tone that struck a balance between fear and empowerment. Audiences likely would turn away from overly graphic messages. The campaign's simple call to action – *Keep out of reach. Get help fast. Tell others.* – empowers parents with confidence to prevent injury.

Specific campaign objectives included:

- Increase awareness of the risk and its severity among parents of children six and younger by a statistically significant amount within six months
- Decrease the number of parents who say their children play with devices containing button batteries
- Reach 100 million impressions, with at least 75 percent including the campaign call to action

## EXECUTION

- Safe Kids Worldwide serves as national/local spokespersons. Its 600 chapters and other health and safety partners are using robust toolkits in outreach through local events, websites, newsletters, social media and other efforts.

- Emmett’s mom, Karla Rauch, also serves as a spokesperson, illustrating the devastating impact of button-battery ingestion through her son’s story.
- A sobering video features footage of typical children interacting with devices, showing parents the prevalence of devices in the home. To drive home the seriousness of the issue, the video uses audio from authentic news stories about injured children, including the haunting sound of Emmett Rauch’s labored breathing.
- Planning began in August 2011, with the campaign set to launch mid-October. On August 30, NBC’s “Today Show” aired a battery ingestion story independently from our efforts, resulting in a compacted launch timeline to get in front of the issue that was now primed for national attention.
- The campaign launched Sept. 14, 2011, an Associated Press article featuring Emmett Rauch’s story and a full-page ad in *USA Today* directing readers to [TheBatteryControlled.com](http://TheBatteryControlled.com) and social channels. Momentum continued through a satellite media tour in October, deskside briefings with parenting publications, national and local media relations, outreach to mom bloggers, sponsored celebrity tweets and social media engagement.
- Community outreach through Safe Kids chapters occurred December through May.
- A second video illustrating Emmett Rauch’s story launched in July to reinvigorate the campaign. Media outreach and social media engagement continues today.

## **EVALUATION**

Within six months, Energizer addressed a critical, unknown issue and stimulated a significant shift in parental concern and attitudes. By taking the lead, Energizer has been applauded in news and social channels – and by parents like Karla Rauch.

An online tracking survey of parents revealed the following results:

- More than two-thirds of parents now feel button batteries pose a high danger, as compared to about half at the start of the campaign (28 percent increase).\*
- The tracking survey also indicated that children are not playing with high-risk devices as often. Parents are significantly more likely to say their children never play with key fobs (36 percent increase) and small remote controls (19 percent increase).\*

Reports from Safe Kids coalitions and traditional and online media analysis demonstrated the campaign message has reached:

- More than 220 million media impressions; 85 percent of coverage included some or all of the call to action
- More than 20 million social media impressions
- More than 220,000 YouTube views (100,000 campaign video; 121,000 Emmett’s story)
- More than 240 national and local partners

### **Beyond the Numbers**

By increasing awareness and action, this campaign potentially has saved children’s lives by preventing battery ingestion.

*\*Benchmark survey conducted in September 2011. Tracking survey conducted in March 2012.*