



Sprint Guardian - Making Parents Aware About New Mobile Safety Applications

Sprint, Jan 1, 2013

Summary: 2013 Silver Anvil Award Winner — Marketing Consumer Services — Technology

Research unveiled that an increasing number of kids are using mobile phones, yet there was an unmet need in the market for an affordable bundle of mobile applications to help parents monitor and manage their children's mobile phone usage. PR was tasked with raising awareness among parents about the new Sprint Guardian application bundle to help achieve marketing's sales goals. Through articles, blog posts, broadcast and social media, Sprint's reputation grew as a family-friendly, safety and security-minded company with a great solution for parents and their phone-toting kids.

Marketing consumer services includes programs designed to introduce new services or promote existing services to a consumer audience.

Full Text: SITUATION OVERVIEW

Research states that 75% of 12-17 year olds now own mobile phones – up from 45% in 2004 – and texting is their preferred channel of communication. Parents often find themselves reminding their children about when it's inappropriate to text (such as while driving, at the dinner table, during school, or late at night).

Sprint launched a solution in May 2012 – using PR as a key promotional tool – a bundle of apps called Sprint Guardian (SG) that can help parents enforce responsible phone usage and keep families safe. Apps within the SG bundle allow parents to: lock their child's phone on demand or schedule locks – during dinner, school or late at night (Mobile Controls); locate kids on a map and set up automatic location checks to get notified that kids made it to school safely and on time (Family Locator); automatically lock teenagers' mobile phones when they're driving (Drive First).

Sprint's PR team successfully communicated to a new audience (parents), a new message: Sprint is committed to providing families the resources and tools to make their mobile lives easier and to help protect and manage their child's wireless usage. SG is a solution that offers a bundle of family apps in a simple, easy-to-access location on the mobile phone and online, which is value-priced for family savings.

The SG PR campaign ran from May 2012-January 2013, including media outreach, a satellite media tour, social media campaign and webinar. Parenting expert and author Amy McCready was hired as a spokeswoman to promote SG to consumers during a satellite media tour (broadcast TV and radio), social media campaign and webinar. McCready touted SG as a tool for parents, focusing on "Safe Tech Tips for Families." After the SMT, Sprint and McCready used social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter) to reach an online audience. McCready's best-selling parenting book, "If I Have to Tell You One More Time," lent credibility with reporters. McCready wove SG messaging into an overall safe technology-for-kids story. The Sprint brand gained valuable exposure through video clips of people using Drive First, Mobile Controls and Family Locator that ran during broadcast interviews. Messages were intended to

reach consumers to raise interest in SG and to tell a positive story about how parents can use technology to help keep kids safe. SG media coverage included USA Today, Techlicious, CNET, Engadget, various mom blogs as well as FoxNews.com and TV and radio stations around the country including ABC, NBC and FOX affiliates. Between Aug. and Oct. (the peak of PR activities with McCready), the number of new SG subscribers grew by 180 percent. Clearly the PR campaign contributed to the sales increase since no advertising was taking place at that time – just PR, Sprint Zone (app on Sprint Android devices) and online promotion.

RESEARCH

- Sprint used primary and secondary research to examine mobile phone usage/behavior among kids and parents' feedback while using SG applications. Primary research included focus groups with parents, visiting their homes and phone calls, which was conducted by Sprint's partner and the Sprint Guardian application developer, Location Labs, and helped with development of the apps' features.
- Secondary research proved there was an unmet need in the market for this type of service. It also helped the Sprint marketing team decide to value price the bundles at a price that families would be willing to pay. Research also showed that teenagers are using mobile phones irresponsibly; Sprint Guardian apps were touted as a solution that could help parents with this behavior:
 - Pew Internet Research: 75% of 12 to 17 year olds now own mobile phones – up from 45% in 2004 – and texting has become the preferred channel of communication. Proof: big market for SG apps.
 - Pew Internet Research: 65% of teens text late at night when they should be sleeping; 64% of teens text in class. Solution: Sprint Mobile Controls
 - Consumer Reports survey: 29% of teens admit to texting while driving. Solution: Sprint Drive First

PLANNING

Objectives

- Attract new Sprint customers and SG subscribers and deliver valuable information to current customers (specifically parents), building Sprint's reputation as family-friendly, safety and security-minded company by raising awareness of SG through lifestyle media and mom blogs.
 - Goal: help support Marketing's sales goals by raising awareness through at least one national story; five mom blog posts.
- Utilize parenting expert Amy McCready to generate media coverage in TV and radio stations across the country and to reach parents during live webinar.
 - SMT goal: media coverage to include one national placement;
 - Webinar goal: 500 registrants for each session, double the visits to SG website.
- Social Media campaign through Amy McCready's Positive Parenting Solutions' and Sprint's social media channels.
 - Goal: reach parents directly online-Sprint customers who are parents and McCready's loyal followers.

Target Audience

- National, local, and online media, print and broadcast, and industry influencers.
- Existing and potential Sprint customers, especially parents, who can benefit from Sprint Guardian apps.

Strategy

- Show Sprint Guardian in action through in-person media demos at CTIA, media tour with long-lead consumer lifestyle media and in video produced for Sprint newsroom site/pitches and b-roll created for SMT.
- Hire third-party parenting expert to lend credibility to SG applications among parents.

Budget: \$43,000

EXECUTION

- Utilized CTIA Wireless Tradeshow in May to showcase news of upcoming SG launch in front of key tech and industry media and analysts. Pre-announced launch at this high-profile wireless industry event to tell story directly to media and demo SG in person.
- Distributed News Releases at CTIA in May (pre-launch) and June when service became available.
- Created Sprint Guardian video showcasing the apps' benefits for parents. Post in Sprint Newsroom site, pitch.
- Satellite Media Tour in Aug: Parenting expert and author, Amy McCreedy, was hired as a spokeswoman to promote SG to consumers during a satellite media tour (broadcast TV and radio), social media campaign and webinar. McCreedy touted SG as a tool for parents, focusing on "Safe Tech Tips for Families."
- Social Media Campaign in Sept.: After the SMT, Sprint and McCreedy used social media (blogs, Facebook, Twitter) to reach an online audience.
- Internal communications May-Jan.: Posted stories on Sprint's intranet site, i-Connect for employees.
- Media relations May-Jan.: Long lead media tours in June and Sept. in NYC; met with long-lead lifestyle and tech media, demoed SG in person; pitched regional parenting publications, parenting editors at local newspapers.
- Mom blogger program Sept.-Dec.: A new program to build engaging relationships with Mom bloggers; Select bloggers receive demo phones to test Sprint Guardian.
- Webinar in Jan.: Live webinar with parenting expert Amy McCreedy. More than tripled the average number of daily page views to the Sprint Guardian website on the day of the webinar.

EVALUATION

Objective: Attract new Sprint customers and SG subscribers and deliver valuable information to current customers (specifically parents), building Sprint's reputation as family-friendly, safety and security-minded company by raising awareness of SG through lifestyle media and mom blogs.

- **Goal: one national story; five mom blog posts.**

Results:

- Mom bloggers who wrote about Sprint Guardian include Tech4Mommies, LittleTechGirl, VOXXI, Cool Mom Tech, and Mom Start (met goal).
- Other coverage from lifestyle media tour and media outreach includes USA Today (met goal), MSN, Techlicious, CNET and G Style.
- Between Aug. and Oct., the number of new SG subscribers grew by 180 percent.
- No advertising was taking place at that time. (met goal).
- Messaging in stories and blogs was overwhelmingly positive about SG apps, building Sprint's reputation as family friendly.

Objective: Utilize parenting expert Amy McCreedy to generate media coverage in TV and radio stations across the country and to reach parents during live webinar.

- **SMT goal: one national placement;**
- **Webinar goal: 500 registrants for each session, double visits to SG website .**

Results:

- **SMT TV Placements:** 116 Local, 2 National, 962,862 impressions.
- **Radio Placements:** 394 placements; 10,587,150 audience reach.
- **Coverage included:** FoxNews.com (met national placement goal) and TV and radio stations around the country including ABC, NBC and FOX affiliates.
- **Exceeded our webinar goal:** More than 1,000 parents registered for the webinar (502 for 1p.m.; 533 for 9 p.m.) and page views to the SG website more than tripled the average daily number on the day of the webinar.

Objective: Social Media campaign through Amy McCready's Positive Parenting Solutions' and Sprint's social media channels.

- **Met Goal: reach parents directly online-Sprint customers who are parents and McCready's followers.**

Results:

- **Sprint**
 - Sprint.com Community blog post; "Sprint Guardian helps parents teach kids to use technology safely and responsibly" Received 4,984 views.
 - Sprint Facebook Page: 873,040 Followers;
 - Sprint's post on Guardian received 103 "likes," 42 comments and 11 shares.
 - @Sprint on Twitter; 127,444 Twitter followers; Tweeted three times and retweeted McCready.
- **Positive Parenting Solutions**
 - Wrote two blog posts from Amy McCready on PositiveParentingSolutions.com.
 - Positive Parenting Solutions Facebook Page; 23,553 followers 2 posts; 4 shares; 17 Likes.
 - @AmyMcCreadyPPS on Twitter; 3,323 Twitter followers; Tweeted 6 times Aug. 28-Sept. 4.

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