

BENU presents a “win-win-win” solution to the mid-size marketplace by offering employers avenues in which to give employees more benefit choices, cost-effectively.

BENU, Inc.:

Public Relations Program Launches New Concept and Product

How a strategic communications plan positioned a health care insurance company at the forefront of its niche marketplace and built awareness of its unique product offering.

The Company

BENU, Inc. is a new “benefits solutions” company offering insurance products and services on a unique and proprietary technology platform targeting the mid-size employer (51-1000 employees) marketplace. Based in San Mateo, Calif., BENU allows employers to select from leading health insurance plans and ancillary benefits providers at the same premium structure offered by a single carrier in the marketplace. As employers increasingly shift the cost of health care to their employees in hopes of combating health care inflation, consumers are demanding more choices in how their health care dollars are spent. BENU presents a “win-win-win” solution to the mid-size marketplace by offering employers avenues in which to give employees more benefit choices, cost-effectively.

Strategic Issues

BENU is funded through venture capital and directed by experienced health care and technology executives. Since BENU offers a new product in the defined contribution marketplace, it is imperative that its communications not only define “BENU” and identify its offerings, but also validate its business proposition to warrant its existence to key audiences. Scott Public Relations was selected to develop a strategic communications plan to introduce the company to key desired audiences; build awareness of its distinctive and proprietary product aimed at the mid-size employer marketplace and differentiate the company from competitors.

The Tactical Solution

Scott Public Relations developed a two-phase communications and public relations strategy that: (1) aggressively positioned the company and its products in response to the marketplace trend of “defined contribution” health care spending and (2) elevated BENU’s experienced leadership as spokespeople for the emerging company.

Targeted audiences included insurance and health plan leadership as potential partners; mid-size employers and benefits managers as customers; insurance brokers as distributors and trade and local business media.

Scott Public Relations reviewed the client’s business plan and white paper to identify information and data that would be translated into company communications tools and materials. A communications plan was then

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developed in consultation with the client. The plan reviewed issues and opportunities for an anticipated northwestern United States launch.

Phase I key achievements included assessment of competition and market trends; completion of communications plan and timeline; trade and business media opportunities identified; company positioning statement and “elevator pitch” draft and Board of Directors candidates secured for media relations and promotional support.

Activities during Phase II included completion of key messages for stakeholders; press kit materials and “Frequently Asked Questions” documents. Additionally, third-party testimonials were secured from brokers and employers validating BENU’s marketplace receptivity and concept.

Results

Media efforts included creating and placing bylined articles placed in leading trade publications such as *Business Insurance*, *Managed Care Week*, *National Underwriter*, *Broker World*, and *Employee Benefit Plan Review*. BENU coverage was secured in leading local business weekly and bylined article placed in local business publication. Interviews were also secured with *MONEY Magazine* and *Industry Week*, two publications with a combined circulation of 2,424,244.

The resulting media coverage produced various quantifiable benefits including solicitations from target and non target market brokers and employers; solicitations from potential health insurance partners; “merchandisable” content for the company’s Web site; marketing and sales collateral via article reprints and increased awareness with trade and business media that generated additional coverage.

Scott Public Relations...

“A Step Ahead” is a publication of Scott Public Relations (www.scottpublicrelations.com) a public relations firm specializing in business-to-business communication for firms in health care, insurance and technology. Scott Public Relations helps its clients, ranging from Fortune 100 firms to start-up companies, stay “A Step Ahead” in their marketing programs and in their industries.

For More Information

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Can public relations define and build your market?

- Is your product or company presenting a new idea to the marketplace?
- Do you first have to educate your market on the product before they will be interested in buying it?
- Do you have executives on your staff or board who are recognized experts in your industry and who can serve as the “thought leaders” to introduce this new concept?
- Do you have that first customer who can speak about why they chose your product service?

If the answer is “yes,” then developing a robust public relations strategy could be the key to accelerating your company’s profile in the market and increasing the number of consumer hits to your website.