

Creative Marketing Research To Heat Up Sales

The Opportunity

C.H. Robinson Worldwide (CHR) is one of North America's largest third party logistics companies, with operations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, South America, Europe, and Asia. CHR is the largest distributor of fresh produce in North America and a major transportation provider for temperature-sensitive freight (i.e., general refrigerated and frozen food items, confectionary products, beverages, etc.) The number of service providers in this market is limited and profit margins are healthy; therefore, it is in C.H. Robinson's best interest to continue penetrating the market. As a result, Brian Everett of MindShare Strategies launched a White Paper to help CHR accomplish the following:

- Generate qualified sales leads and potential business opportunities
- Increase the company's penetration in the temperature-controlled markets
- Position CHR as an expert in the temperature-controlled industry
- Strengthen credibility with those in the industry
- Generate media awareness for CHR (gain credibility with editors and reporters in the trade press, and strengthen name recognition)
- Open the door to the speaker's circuit and other opportunities to tell the CHR story
- Consultants gain a better understanding of C.H. Robinson, resulting in references of CHR to their clients

Brian Everett of MindShare Strategies was the Lead Project Manager to initially launch C.H. Robinson's Temperature-Controlled Logistics Report. The project has been so successful that C.H. Robinson continues to produce the report in cooperation with Iowa State University each year.

Target Markets

- Current customers (particularly in the food, fresh produce, confectionary, and beverage markets)
- Potential customers
- Carriers and other industry-related associates for C.H. Robinson
- Media (editors, reporters)
- Logistics consultants serving the temperature-controlled markets



Case Study: Research-Based Marketing

Solution Overview and Implementation

In 1997, there was no valid report that addressed the unique opportunities and challenges of shippers and carriers of temperature-sensitive products. Therefore, the solution was to create a statistically valid research project involving in-depth telephone interviews with shippers of such products that would provide useful, valuable information, including the following:

- Identify developing trends/industry projections and predictions (shipper and consumer levels)
- Current trends (i.e., ECR, quick response) that impact the temperature-controlled market
- Current challenges/obstacles/market conditions facing the industry
- Who is doing what? (perspectives from asset owners and managers)
- Define the temperature-controlled market
- How much of this product is transported on a national level? (North American)
- Identify the import/export volume
- Identify the size and condition of available equipment/fleets (trailers, fleets, international containers)
- Pricing fluctuations, truckload and LTL rates on an annual basis
- Seasonal markets and how they affect the availability of equipment
- Technology advances

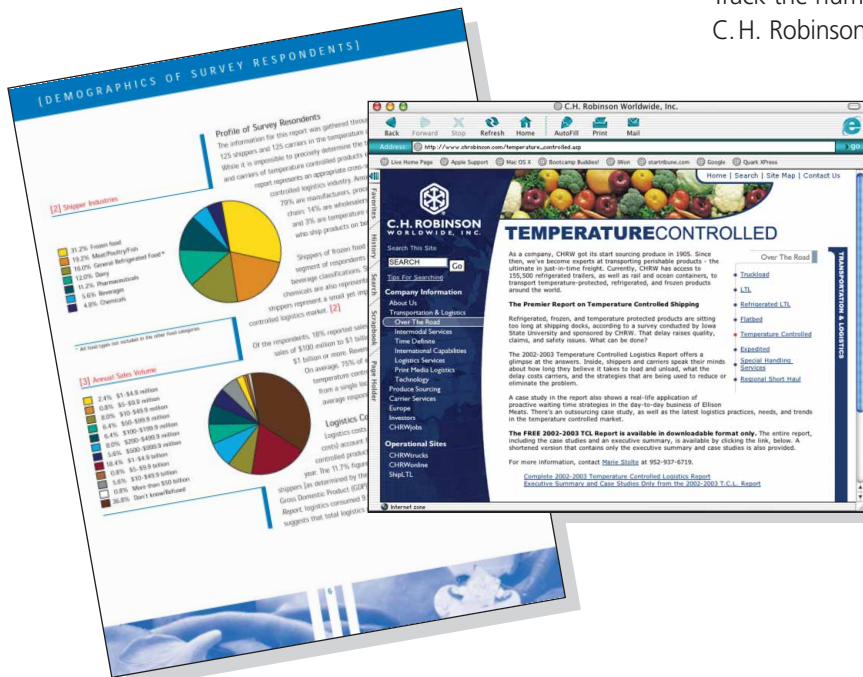
The Temperature-Controlled Logistics Report was then promoted through a variety of channels, including:

- Working with editors and reporters in the trade and business media
- Holding press conferences at trade events
- Interactive programs and exposure through CHR's Web site
- Speaking opportunities at local, regional and national conferences (Brian Everett was selected to present at two national CLM annual conference sessions)
- Use as a sales tool through C. H. Robinson's network of 130 branch offices
- National advertising campaigns

Evaluating Success and Measured Results

The success of the Temperature-Controlled Logistics Report was measured and tracked in a variety of ways, including:

- Media tracking reports to include the number of stories and press releases placed
- Tracking of business development and leads as a result of inquiries for the report
- Number of times presented on the speaker's circuit
- Evaluation of additional opportunities in this market niche generated through a toll-free number in the Logistics Division and through CHR's office network
- Track the number of hits on the TCL section of C. H. Robinson's Web site



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