

# GrayMatterz

THE ZIMMERMAN GROUP, INC.

*Marketing/Consulting*

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## THE CONNECTION BETWEEN KETCHUP AND PR

It's true. We don't all promote products that are as exciting as purple ketchup. But there are lessons for us in a recent media relations blitz orchestrated by Heinz America.

Before I give the tasty details of that campaign, let me note that this ketchup promotion is a good example of what advertising guru Al Ries announces in his new book, *The Fall of Advertising & the Rise of PR*.

### ADVERTISING VS. PR

According to Ries, "The purpose of advertising is not to build a brand, but to defend a brand once the brand has been built by other means, primarily public relations . . ."

In what will certainly lead to heated debates, he goes on to say that "Most companies spend way too much money trying to build a brand with advertising (when they should be using that money for PR) and way too little money defending their brands with advertising after they have been built."

His premise: public relations is the right technique for launching a brand.

So how do you launch a brand using public relations?



## **ENTER PURPLE KETCHUP**

Here's how Heinz North America set up the story about their new product, "Funky Purple" EZ Squirt ketchup.

First, their agency sent a press release nationally with the intriguing headline, "Grab Your Buns and Brace Yourselves," including a mystery photo alluding to a new, but as yet unnamed ketchup color.

Next, they distributed press kits with bottles of both the purple and red varieties, along with bags of chips to fuel taste-testing competitions. And a final phase involved sending b-roll footage — of the now revealed color — via national satellite.

A stirring success? Absolutely, with the campaign generating almost 2,000 stories. The PR budget: \$100,600.

## **MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

Is that a big budget? While \$100,000 is a big PR budget for most small to mid-size companies, it's not necessarily a big ad budget. Consider, for instance, that the amount of "ink" that Heinz got through these stories would have cost \$6.4 million to buy as advertising space.

Ries points to The Body Shop, Starbucks, eBay, and many other examples of brands built successfully through PR.

What about business-to-business applications? Ries mentions Oracle, Cisco, and SAP as multi-billion-dollar companies that built brands with almost no advertising.

How about you? How do you decide when to use advertising, when to use PR? Is the decision driven by budget or by goal?

At The Zimmerman Group, we have always viewed marketing as the umbrella for such promotional tools as advertising, public relations, direct mail, and more. So our job is to help you determine which tools will meet your specific needs best.

Give us a call if you'd like to discuss your current strategy — and ponder, together, how to squeeze more business from your brands.