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## Dictionary.com Defines Mobile Offerings Via Trend Data

By Tanya Lewis

**Agency:** MSR Communication (San Francisco, CA)

**Client:** Dictionary.com (Oakland, CA)

**Campaign:** [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com) Promotes Mobile Apps, Showcasing “In-the-Moment” Word Learning

**Duration:** May 2010 – March 2011

**Budget:** less than \$75,000

Lisa Sullivan-Cross, Dictionary.com's VP of marketing and business development, says the company hired MSR Communication as AOR in March 2010 to help drive awareness of mobile offerings and position the brand as a content partner for device makers and app developers.

“We were known for our online dictionary,” she explains. “We launched our first mobile app in late 2009 and started to get some traction, but no one in the mobile, consumer, or business media was talking about it. We wanted to evolve our brand to be about word discovery everywhere.”

### Strategy

Sullivan-Cross says aggregated usage data from nearly 60 million unique monthly visitors to the mobile and desktop websites was used to illustrate trends to hook media and bloggers, and establish Dictionary.com as a resource for consumer behavior on various mobile devices. Michael Burke, MSR account supervisor, adds that the team leveraged the idea that words users look up provide unique insight into thought and behavior.

Additional pitches were crafted around device launches and new Dictionary.com offerings and partnerships.



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## Tactics

Communications efforts kicked off with a May 2010 press release announcing 10 million downloads of Dictionary.com's free mobile app and the launch of its iPad specific app.

Mobile, wireless, tech, and consumer media and bloggers were targeted. Consumer pitches were tailored to parenting, student, professional, mommy, and lifestyle audiences. They included pop culture hooks, such as TV shows that increase vocabulary.

Burke says trend data pitched included comparing types of words people were looking up on iPhone, iPad, Blackberry, and Android. The team also communicated ways in which Dictionary.com uses data to develop upgrades and new features.

Outreach was conducted around last summer's iPhone 4 launch, and the team touted Dictionary.com as one of the first companies to enable Apple's iAd platform. September announcements included launches of a paid app and the API Developer Center, a program enabling web and mobile developers to create apps using Dictionary.com content. A partnership with Barnes & Nobles' NOOK and its mobile app store was announced in late October.

## Results

App downloads increased from 10 million in May to 30 million (including free and paid versions) to date.

The campaign garnered coverage in about 130 outlets, including Gizmodo, *US News & World Report*, *Bloomberg BusinessWeek*, *The Washington Post*, Reuters, *USA Today*, and Mashable.

The API Developer Center currently has more than 750 members.

## Future

The team is promoting new educational offerings, including a flashcards app and a Spanish/English dictionary app that will launch in June.



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