

MSR Case Study



SpinVox is a mobile service that converts spoken words into text messages that are delivered to recipients via email, SMS, and even blogs.

In May of 2008, SpinVox tapped MSR Communications to quickly build brand awareness among consumers in the U.S.

Though the company boasts strong venture capital support and offices all over the world—including the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Australia, and Chile—it also faced its share of challenges. These included few carrier relationships in the US, little to no traction among US consumers, and a swarm of better-known North American competitors. We were sure to encounter quite a bit of skepticism among the consumer media after years of hearing about or experiencing firsthand a number of voice recognition technologies that failed to deliver on their great promise.

In order to live up to SpinVox's PR motto—the best hits are the quick hits—while creating real groundswell it could build on, MSR created an aggressive media relations plan that segmented its reporter outreach in a way that allowed for a continuous stream of pitching without oversaturating the media. We emphasized real-time outlets—i.e., TV/radio, blogs and newspapers—with pitches that targeted a score of specific niche readerships such as moms, dads, employees, students, entrepreneurs, travelers, and brides-to-be.

Each pitch demonstrated not only how SpinVox appealed to the needs of a particular demographic, but because it was funneled through such a niche outlet, it reached readers right when they were thinking about that part of their lives, whether it be life at home, at work or on the road.

Once SpinVox began to experience some early traction, MSR believed it could quickly extend SpinVox's reach into the consumer market while separating itself from its pack of competitors by maintaining a steady stream of coverage. We were able to accomplish this despite a dearth of company announcements by taking advantage of national holidays and events that not only provided us with a natural news element, but also allowed us to showcase the fun and quirky elements of the SpinVox brand. Firmly established traditions such as Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Back to School combined with such under recognized observances as National Coming Out Day and National Punctuation Day, and such current issues as text-related injuries and in-car texting bans to give us all the ammo we needed to keep SpinVox in the spotlight.

MSR also generated brand awareness, brand interaction and new subscriptions through a Harris Interactive that tested US consumer attitudes toward accent, an aggressive gift bag program, and several grassroots level social blogging activities.

In just five short months, MSR's efforts resulted in more than 100 feature articles, including consistent blog coverage across all targeted demographics, i.e., *Daily Candy*, *MomGadget*, and *Geeky Traveller*; broadcast coverage including WNBC-4 NYC, KRON-4 San Francisco, NBC-11 San Francisco, and Playboy Radio on Sirius; and ongoing online and print coverage in such key metro and heartland outlets for SpinVox as *MSNBC*, *San Jose Mercury News*, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, *Houston Community Newspapers*, and *Columbus Dispatch*.