

...ly negative when you're talking about the general-interest media," points out Glenn Hansen, communications director at American Suzuki Motor Corp., which makes ATVs and dirt bikes. "Television historically has been negative since that CBS 60 Minutes segment."

...ive basis, explains Mike Mount, director of communications for the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA) and its sister organization, the All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute. "We offer free ATV training for any media member who wants to take it so they can write stories on what are the im-



Set up events where journalists can get trained and then ride an off-road to find out what makes it so appealing.

■ Use a regional strategy. Target the Western recreation spots where demand for off-road vehicles is greater, and target other regions like the Midwest with more utility-themed stories, such as ATVs as a work tool for farmers.

CRITICAL HIT

LMA states its case in 'NYTimes'

Who is your client, and what are its media goals?

Cyrus Afzali: The Legal Marketing Association (LMA) is a not-for-profit group charged with advancing the cause of legal marketing. It was looking to use PR to get out in front of what it considered to be overbroad rules changes to legal marketing that were being put in place by the state of New York.

The New York Times

June 19, 2007

ADVERTISING
Getting Law Firms to Like Commercials

By MARIA ASPAN

TELEVISION advertising has long been frowned on in the legal profession, as a rule and a no-nothing, even in those lawyers and, in some cases, can result in a full partnership between a generalist legal directory and an attorney and advertising to overcome those stigmas.

Eric Neilsen, marketing director at the law firm of Spots, and their regional in the Mid-Atlantic work with Spot Runner, an online service that helps small business television. Spot Runner, which is based in Los Angeles, will help law firms produce commercials that can run in local markets.

Although the Spot Runner Web site currently offers a general library of off-the-shelf services targeting other industries, the agency is creating new ads specifically for

Name: Cyrus Afzali, president, Astoria Communications (Sloatsburg, NY)

Placement: *The New York Times*, June 19

Pitch timeline: Six months

the LMA as an expert source to talk about the broader rules changes.

The changes to the New York legal marketing rules are fairly complex — was it difficult to explain the LMA's take on this issue?

Afzali: No. What we did was position it as a business issue, and even without hard financial numbers, we were able to argue that these changes would have a negative impact on the whole legal business. LMA's past president Kim Perret spoke to Aspan about the marketing preferences of different types of law firms and the decision-making process they go through, and whether advertising is a good choice for their culture.

What was the impact of the hit?

Afzali: The story ran June 19 and did a great job of validating the work the LMA was doing on behalf of the legal profession. It also triggered a call from MSNBC to get comment on another issue involving legal marketing, and so the organization was really pleased with the story. ■

David Ward

The New York Times *Business* section is obviously a high-profile outlet, but what made it a good target for this cause?

Afzali: *The New York Times Business* section is read by lawyers and legal firms around the country, and because these new rules could potentially impact every lawyer who did business in New York, it was a good fit. While doing some media outreach on the issue, we got wind that one of the *Times'* reporters, Maria Aspan, was already at work on a column about legal TV ads, so we pitched her on using

MEDIA UPS AND DOWNS



Univision hosts the first presidential debate held in Spanish, as well as English, but it gets lukewarm reviews from TV, political critics

Unionized **Wall St. Journal** staffers post provocative "Show Me the Money" signs in the newsroom when new owner Rupert Murdoch comes to visit

USA Today celebrates its 25th anniversary, remaining the US' largest newspaper by circulation and seeing revenue growth during a challenging time for the industry

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INSIDE INFORMATION

Real-life tools can help businesses

WITH THE EXPLOSION in popularity of so-called virtual worlds, the question of what, exactly, businesses can do to harness these new entities is sometimes difficult to answer. What tools are there to help a business find its way in the murky maze of virtual worlds?

Well, for a start, there are old-fashioned conferences. It might be surprising to find that the people behind the virtual communities still interact with one another in person, but that's exactly what they need, says Chris Sherman, executive director for Virtual Worlds Conference.

Next month, Sherman is hosting the Virtual Worlds Fall Conference and Expo in San Francisco, hoping to help businesses find their best options in the virtual world. He says many industries don't yet understand how they can harness one of the more than 25 virtual worlds to best engage with customers, partners, and employees. So why not hold the conference virtually?



KEY POINTS:

- Conferences are useful tools for businesses navigating virtual worlds
- Don't just enter a virtual world for a presence; understand your goals and objectives
- A virtual connection can not replace a human one; use it as just another tool to communicate with customers, partners, and employees

"The conference is a one-stop shop," Sherman says. "We're platform agnostic. We did it in one of these virtual worlds. We have to do it in all of them. It can either make 25 phone calls or it can make 25 phone calls."