



Sparking Interest in Electricity In A New City

Overview

Client: **Spark Energy**

Industry: **Utilities**

Services: **Public Relations
Social Media**

Results

- 39 million consumer impressions
- 114,000 event attendees
- 62 placements and broadcast appearances
- Engaged over 5,500 followers across social channels

Challenge

Spark Energy was entering the Pennsylvania market for the first time ahead of electricity deregulation in the PECO market on January 2, 2011. The company had no plan to have a formal presence in the area and had no social media strategy in place. Many other alternative providers were entering the market at the same time, and there was confusion among residents about what energy deregulation meant for them.

Since electricity choice was new to people in the Philadelphia area, there was an opportunity for Spark Energy to “punch above its weight” and compete with much larger companies. Using public relations and social media, there were several campaigns executed to increase brand awareness.

Insight

PECO customers didn't know a lot about deregulation and didn't trust the alternative suppliers suddenly popping up everywhere. Because Spark was one of the smaller national competitors, it also wanted to get the most bang for its buck, especially with earned media. Working with Spark Energy leadership and other partner agencies, Slice Communications developed the “Spark of Kindness” campaign that helped people save in other ways in order to promote the company's 10 percent savings over PECO. The campaign integrated experiential marketing, social media, and public relations, and gave Spark a local community presence.

Teddy Bear Giveaway

Before Christmas, Spark Energy took over a monumental staircase in suburban Philadelphia to give away 1000 teddy bears in a few hours. Using the visual set up with teddy bears in a small town attracted tons of attention. Additionally, word-of-mouth spread the campaign further since people would ask about the teddy bears. Overall, this campaign generated over 1,000 direct in-person engagements and 3,000 in-person impressions, along with coverage in the Delaware County Daily Times, West Chester Patch, & NBC10.



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Lining up for 10-cent gas in South Jersey
Friday, June 17, 2011



10 Cent / Gallon Gas Giveaway

Slice Communications conducted media outreach to let local news outlets know that Spark Energy was giving away gasoline for 10 cents per gallon for the first 100 people who showed up at a certain time and place. To be eligible, a coupon had to be downloaded from the SparkEnergyPA Facebook page. The event was successful, garnering media attention from **6ABC** and more, attracting hundreds more Facebook "Likes," engaging people online with photos and video, and creating a connection to the local community. The event was so successful it was repeated when Spark Energy entered the PSE&G market in NJ months later.



Sponsorships

To extend Spark Energy's reach and to help connect them with the community, Slice Communications connected them with several sponsorships opportunities. Sponsorships include NBC10's Light Up the Holidays, New Years Eve Fireworks Show, Philadelphia Eagles, St. Baldrick's fundraiser, and the Philadelphia Flower Show. Overall, sponsorships garnered over 280,000 impressions.



Sudden Sparks

To increase in-person interactions, Spark Energy targeted locally owned establishments and engaged people with incentives. Events included paying for lunch at a local restaurant, covering manicures at nail salons, and free movie passes. These events created over 5,000 in-person engagements and over 8,000 in-person impressions.



Success

The PECO market launch was the most successful new market launch for Spark Energy. The campaign generated tens of millions of media impressions, thousands of "Likes" on Facebook and followers on Twitter, and market shares well beyond company goals.



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