



Case Study: Knology's introduction to Pinellas County

With the purchase of Verizon's cable franchise in Pinellas County, Florida, Knology inherited the heady task of introducing itself to the market and taking on incumbent competitor Bright House Networks.

Outspent 7-to-1 by Bright House, it was apparent that Knology needed a highly impactful campaign, one that generated substantial word of mouth, in order to maximize its advertising dollars and generate brand awareness.

The second challenge were the geographic limitations of Knology's new Pinellas franchise, since it only served a portion of the multi-county Tampa, St. Petersburg, Clearwater DMA—the nation's 13th largest TV market and, as a result, quite expensive for air time. For reasons of geography and expense, TV was not considered a viable medium for Knology other than the use of cross-channel TV on Knology's system.

The agency identified outdoor advertising as the primary medium for the task, one that allowed for the targeting of precise geographic locations and the ability to take advantage of this highly mobile commuter market.

The agency strategized that the creative should capitalize on the silent first-letter in the Knology name. Thus, the 'Silent K' campaign was born. Teaser billboards and transit kings and tails featuring nothing more than other silent-K objects and words such as nob, nocker and nockwurst were positioned on bright-orange backgrounds in heavy concentrations around Pinellas County. You could not drive around the county without literally being presented with a large number of impressions. By design, for 6 weeks, the market saw and heard nothing that would reveal the meaning or sponsorship of these cryptic messages.

To supplement the outdoor campaign, a similar series of teaser ads was developed for a newspaper campaign that appeared in targeted neighborhood editions of the St. Petersburg Times.

As a result, tremendous word of mouth was generated and people talked about the campaign, speculating about what it meant and what it was for. People even wrote and called radio stations and newspapers to inquire.

After six weeks, the reveal billboard introduced Knology, the company with the silent K, as Pinellas County's new choice for phone, cable and Internet.

Coinciding with the reveal billboard, a radio campaign created by the agency introduced national spokesperson Thom Sharp and a character aptly named Silent Kay. Thom referred to and even directed questions to Silent Kay, who came alive without ever actually speaking a word on the air.

The tonality of the collateral materials and the advertising exemplified several attributes: the South, hometown, local and neighborly. We wanted Knology to stand out from the crowd to say, "We're different. We offer better service, higher quality technology and we'll stand by our promises. Try us."

The communications tactics included: Cross channel television, radio, newspaper, outdoor, transit, bus shelters, collateral materials, dm, door hangers, flyers, banner advertising, press kits, point of purchase materials, and much more.

Media played a critical role in the campaign. As we mentioned earlier, we did not have the benefit of a huge advertising budget, so we needed to make our campaign stand out in the market quickly and effectively. Proprietary media tools were applied to measure and pay for media reaching only those homes targeted.

Results:

Client generated post-campaign research revealed that the 'Silent K' campaign generated a quantum leap in brand awareness for Knology, virtually catapulting from near 0% to 48% awareness in just a few short weeks. To this day, consumers and advertising peers speak glowingly of not only the success of the campaign, but its likeability as well.

Of the total of forty-three awards presented to Lord and Lasker at this year's regional Addy awards show, twenty-three were for the agency's work for Knology, the majority of which were for the "Silent K" campaign, as it won numerous accolades in all categories including, outdoor, newspaper and radio.