



Powderhorn's "Plugged In" Campaign Lands Marketing Award

Angel Fire, Okemo and Stevens Pass Also Recognized.

Angel Fire, Powderhorn, Okemo and Stevens Pass were presented with this year's annual Marketing Awards during a reception at NSAA's National Convention held in May. The awards, sponsored this year by SnoCountry Mountain Ski Association, are presented annually to ski resorts nationwide, both large and small, for their successful marketing and guest service programs that ultimately help grow the sports of skiing and snowboarding. This year's Best Overall Marketing Program was presented in four

resort categories based on skier and rider visitation: Up to 99,999 visits; 100,000 to 250,000 visits; 250,000 to 500,000 visits; and 500,000 and more visits.

Judges for the awards were James Chung, president of Reach Advisors, Belmont, Mass.; Al Crolus, senior vice president of Primedia's Action Sports Group; Samantha Rufo, president of nxt Concepts, Powell, Ohio; and Bernie Weichsel, president of BEWI Productions, Waltham, Mass. Here are highlights of the winning campaigns: ♦



2007 Marketing and Guest Service Award Winners (left to right): Former Mt. Hood Meadows President/COO Dave Riley; Powderhorn Resort President Steve Bailey; Snow Time Inc. President Scott Romberger, accepting on behalf of Whitetail Resort; Okemo Mountain Resort Marketing Director Scott Clarkson; Angel Fire Resort Marketing Director David Dekema; Stevens Pass GM John Gifford; and Beaver Creek Resort Ski and Snowboard School Director Jim Kercher.

500,000+ skier visits

Okemo Mountain Resort, Vt.



Okemo's marketing campaign for 2006/07 was a follow up to our successful "Oke-Words" campaign of 2006. The campaign uses Okemo as part of a word or phrase followed by a definition for a newly coined compound word. For example: OKEMOMENT, OKEMORNIN', OKEMOTHER NATURE, OKEMONORAIL, OKEMOMENTUM and OKEMONOGAMY. These words and definitions were supported by evocative photography that translated into fresh concepts for Okemo's print ad campaign. Oke-Words were also used as a touchstone theme for the resort's collateral, website, television ads, billboards. Even the resort's sponsor vehicle was dubbed The OKEMOBILE.

Whether the viewer regarded the campaign as hokey or profound, they would often find themselves creating new Oke-Words of their own. Evidence was the many new offerings submitted by email over the course of the season. What better brand building than a campaign that's passively interactive and a little cerebral? Strategically, with the recent challenging weather patterns in New England, there was a renewed focus on supporting Okemo's brand-pillar of snowmaking and grooming. This permeated Okemo's messaging for 2006/07 and affected how Okemo approached its entire marketing mix. Other key points of difference: A new Parks & Pipes site was created with an edgier, more youthful focus and an interactive platform that included park design and video contests.

The Okemo Press Kit was styled like an illustrated dictionary, providing the perfect platform to introduce the Oke-Words campaign to the media. A 3-D billboard featuring a life-sized, life-like mannequin on a snowboard sliding a 42-foot rail was erected along Interstate 91 north of Hartford, Conn., to brand Okemo's Nor'Easter Super Park. Okemo also purchased space on a digital billboard on I-95 to reach passing skiers and snowboarders with current trail and lift openings as well as upcoming events. As a result, even in a very challenging season, unique visitors to the resort's website from November through April increased by a whopping 26 percent while Okemo gained more than 3 percent in market share over its closest competitors. Quite frankly, Okemo's marketing team was particularly OKEMORTIFIED when they didn't win this award last year! Okemo won previous marketing awards in 2001/02 and 1999/00.

"Okemo turned on the snowmaking and the marketing to gain share in this wickedly rough season. They pounded home their snow quality message and wrapped it with supporting brand pillars that made sure that Okemo is far more than a commodity product measured only by snowfall." – James Chung, Reach Advisors

250,000 – 500,000 skier visits

Stevens Pass, Wash.



In order for Stevens Pass to stay current and competitive within the day use recre-

ation market in Washington State, we have had to adapt our marketing priorities and practices to best serve our increasingly connected clientele. This last season, we took the opportunity to refresh our marketing communications and create a format that would have greater distribution, greater durability, and communicate a more complete picture of Stevens Pass to our current and potential future guests.

Through the refocusing of the Stevens Pass brand we identified three focus areas in which to improve the effectiveness and reach of our marketing messaging: the creation of new guests, strengthening our relationship with our loyal guests, and the further development of the Stevens Pass brand.

We drew the conclusion that electronic mediums would have the most pronounced effect on creating memorable impressions. It also became apparent that electronic mediums have more durability than other mediums, and that if the final product is impressive enough, grassroots friend-to-friend distribution can vastly supplement initial distribution. This means that a digitally based product can have a much greater final distribution than a one-to-one product-to-impression ratio as end users show the product to other friends, peers and family members.

The result was the creation of two targeted DVD products, a full-length film, a season long series of podcasts, and the creation of a new youth target website at www.ridestevenspass.com. Our initial 55,000 unit run of Digital Brochures and Degree 32 DVDs was distributed in its entirety by January. To date, we continue to receive requests for additional DVDs as well as positive feedback on these pieces, telling us that we have achieved our goal of grassroots, friend-to-friend distribution of our products. A trailer of next year's film, "That's Nice," is now available at www.ridestevenspass.com. This is the second Marketing Award for Stevens Pass, winning its first award in 2004/05.

"Innovative use of new media that reaches a tech-savvy audience. Backed up with appropriate marketing materials, which led to a marketing campaign more in line with the skiers and riders of Stevens Pass." – Bernie Weichsel, BEWI Productions

100,000 – 250,000 skier visits

Angel Fire Resort, N.M.

Angel Fire Resort entered the 2006/07 season coming off the worst snow year New

Mexico had seen since the mid-eighties. The goal was to leverage the 40th anniversary of the resort's first winter to create nostalgia, optimism and enthusiasm for the unique aspects of winter in the Southern Rockies. A fun, throwback logo was created for the "Winter of Love" coupled with the tagline "Still Groovin' after 40 Years!"

The season-long campaign kicked off with local community events and was introduced via Then & Now advertising highlighting the local characters and tenacity that launched the resort. Special promotions included a "40-year-olds Ski and Ride Free" season-long offer. The campaign included print, online, radio and outdoor advertising, retail merchandising, and branding on everything from lapel pins and uniforms to bar glasses, lift tickets and chairlift towers.

Special events on the mountain took on a special "love" theme for the season, many focusing on loyalty-appreciation. For example, The Big Ol' Texas Weekend featured Texas live entertainment, themed cowboy games and the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders scanning tickets in the lift lines. The measurable objectives of this campaign included achieving a skier visit result closer to the resort's previous three-year average without sacrificing lift ticket yield through deep discount offers. Angel Fire Resort finished the season with a 42 percent increase in skier visits from the year prior, despite the fact the mountain was at less than 50 percent of available terrain open for the Christmas holiday season. This is the second Marketing Award for Angel Fire, winning its first award in 2002/03.

"Angel Fire's campaign highlights the key element of the snow experience: it's fun! Plays well off history and area loyalty – 40 years. This campaign integrates on-mountain activities and community involvement and has appeal to all age groups." – Bernie Weichsel, BEWI Productions



Less than 100,000 skier visits

Powderhorn Resort, Colo.



The goals of Powderhorn's mobile marketing campaign were to add value, stay top-of-the-mind throughout the winter season, grow customer loyalty, and boost word-of-mouth communication among these loyal customers. In doing so, we created the "Plugged In" campaign to explore the potential of SMS (short message service) marketing. Driven by guest feedback and current tech savvy trends, we created multiple offbeat, interactive mobile promotions delivered directly to the customer's wireless phone.

Focusing primarily on tweens and twentysomethings, the campaign offered free messages providing special deals, powder alerts, and contests. A variety of little or no cost avenues were used to spread the word about this service including the Powderhorn Resort blog, website, posters, email newsletters, MySpace, and cross promotions with radio.

A key benefit of this campaign was the ability to reach customers directly with last minute special offers to encourage sales during slower time periods. Setup time was a matter of 1-2 days and saved not only the expense of printing forms, advertising, etc., but also the lead time we would normally need using traditional marketing methods.

In the end, we had a 350 percent growth in subscribers from December to February. Website pageviews increase 61 percent during the campaign and 36 percent of subscribers redeemed their special deals at the ticket window. This is Powderhorn's first Marketing Award.

"Powderhorn proves that small resorts can think and act big no matter what the size of their budget. Their "Plugged In" campaign was not only innovative in finding a way to reach the 12-30 year old demographic but also produced a significant conversion rate." – Samantha Rufo, nxt Concepts ■