

Case Study:

A Picture-Perfect Expansion from Audio to Video

Overview

Over the last 14 years, Sound Devices, LLC has built a global reputation as a leading manufacturer of high-quality audio field recorders and mixers renowned for their rugged reliability, operational flexibility and pristine audio quality. Seeking to enter the video side of the industry, the company launched PIX, a new line of high-performance, portable external video recorders. It needed a strategic public relations plan that would not only raise awareness of the new line across its core markets, but also help to establish the Sound Devices brand within a new sector of video end-users.

Objective

D. Pagan Communications (DPC) was tasked with introducing the innovative new line of video products, while maintaining the company's visibility in its primary audio markets. As Sound Devices is a household name for audio mixers and sound designers in the field, this campaign was heavily devoted to targeting a new group of production end users in terms of the video-side of the film and broadcast business. To do this, DPC developed and executed a multi-faceted global public relations campaign—beginning with pre-launch activities, product and user news announcements, feature story placements, creating buzz at domestic and international trade shows and securing product reviews in target-market publications.

Execution

Working closely with the Sound Devices business development team, DPC spearheaded a comprehensive strategy to advance the company's key messaging seamlessly into the marketplace, starting with the PIX line products' soft launch at the 2011 NAB Show. To support this, DPC issued a product preview announcement on the first day of the show. The response from the industry was overwhelming. The Sound Devices booth at the show was packed with attendees and leading trade publication *TV Technology* presented the company with a prestigious product award. With a robust trade show schedule planned for the remainder of the year, DPC supported Sound Devices by issuing market-specific product announcements and arranging one-on-one media appointments at several domestic and international trade shows such as Cine Gear Expo, InfoComm, IBC, CCW, BVE and InterBEE.

In line with educating the market about the new PIX line, DPC implemented an aggressive product review campaign. By seeding review units out to priority editors, the team worked to ensure top media would be in line to review the product. In conjunction with the sales team's relationships with brand loyalists, DPC initiated the first PIX end-user story with audio industry influencer Daron James, who test-drove the product for *Sound & Picture* magazine's coverage of the *63rd Creative Arts Primetime Emmy Awards* red carpet show. Capturing valuable sound bites from influencers and editors who hold Sound Devices in high esteem for its audio expertise, proved to be a valuable, first-hand testimonial for early-adapters considering incorporating PIX into their workflows.

At the start of 2012, Sound Devices hosted an educational seminar on the functionality of PIX in an effort to further penetrate the video market. As Sound Devices continued to evolve the product line and exhibit these developments at its yearly line-up of industry trade shows, DPC offered comprehensive trade-show support to publicize these updates. As the line continued to evolve, DPC promoted the introduction of PIXv2 and its first PIX accessory, PIX-DOCK, at NAB 2012, and the launch of its PIX260 and PIX 260i at IBC 2012 and AES 2012, respectively.

Once the product became available for shipping, DPC executed the remainder of the launch strategy, arranging for the timely appearance of product reviews in Sound Devices' top U.S. media targets, *Digital Video* and *POST* magazine, while also promoting the PIX line's use by early adapters in the field. To reinforce the company's leadership in the space, DPC secured feature stories that focused on the company's transition from an audio company to a brand that now caters to both audio and video.

Now that PIX is gaining traction in the global marketplace, end-user opportunities are becoming increasingly abundant, enabling DPC to wrap up the campaign with maximum global exposure of the product across varied applications. DPC started off 2013 by publicizing the use of PIX in China for the popular *MasterChef China* television series as well as for a *National Geographic* wildlife project. During NAB 2013, DPC officially announced a groundbreaking new feature for all of its PIX products—4:4:4 capabilities—while supporting the availability of its rack-mounted solution, the PIX 260i. To date, reviews continue to appear in leading publications, including the April issue of *TV Technology*, which DPC timed perfectly for the NAB show.

During each phase of the PIX launch, DPC simultaneously managed all media bureau activities for Sound Devices' audio products. While introducing PIX, the team worked to secure inclusion among competitors in several audio product round-ups and features. DPC also worked to introduce the company's newest audio innovations, which included the MixAssist feature for its principal 788T Portable Multi-Track Audio Recorder, the new MixPre-D Compact Field Mixer and the 664 Production Mixer, a brand-new flagship audio mixer and recorder, while continuing to promote the company's audio end users with profiles about the products' use in video games, feature films and other applications. By the official launch of PIX, DPC had concurrently drafted, issued and secured print and online media placements for nearly 20 high-profile audio end-user press releases.

Results

Through DPC's successful development and launch plan for PIX, Sound Devices has seamlessly transformed into a significant player in the manufacture of field-production audio products and high-performance video recorders.

As a result of the execution strategy, PIX coverage was placed in 50 percent of Sound Devices' top-tier North American publications, with more than 10 million online global impressions surrounding the PIX line of products. In keeping with the goal to continue to publicize the company's flagship audio products, more than 16 million online global impressions were achieved during the same time period. DPC's review coordination resulted in 10 reviews of PIX alongside seven audio-related reviews appearing in a range of targeted domestic and international media outlets, with additional audio and video units currently being tested in the field.

In addition to DPC's press release, trade show and product review placements, DPC has successfully secured inclusion of Sound Devices into several portable video and audio recorder/mixer product roundups, further positioning the company as a leader in both niches of the industry.

