
Research & Measurement

Using Measurement to Evaluate, Educate and Engage

American Society of Plastic Surgeons & KDPaine & Partners

Budget \$19,400

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The American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS) is the world's largest plastic surgery specialty organization. The society advocates for patient safety, supports education and research, and provides information and resources to consumers who are considering plastic surgery. In 2006, ASPS tasked KDPaine & Partners to continue its longitudinal analysis of media coverage of the organization and its peers in order to help the public relations department and the Executive Committee better understand the efficacy of its PR programming in communicating with the public.

Objectives

- To provide ASPS with valid quantitative information about its media coverage within the plastic surgery sector in a cost-effective manner.
- To facilitate use of said information for the measurement of departmental objectives and in presentations by the Executive Committee to members.

Research Strategies & Tactics

- **Collect a census of coverage of ASPS and its peer organizations from domestic media outlets.** A census of a restricted population of sources was more meaningful due to the organization's volume of coverage and the importance of targeted placements, which might be lost in a sampling procedure.
 - Tactic:** Leverage ASPS' LexisNexis, Bacon's and VMS accounts to cost-effectively collect content.
 - Tactic:** Manually collect video and text content from top online health resources sites (e.g. WebMD).
 - Tactic:** Use search terms consistent with the 2005 population definition to protect longitudinal integrity.
- **Continue using a descriptive content analysis methodology.** A descriptive approach was selected above inferential or predictive approaches to keep the investigation on budget and to ensure empirical findings.
 - Tactic:** Recruit a member of the public who had considered plastic surgery for health or medical reasons and train him/her to code content in accordance with the coding instrument.
 - Tactic:** Analyze all audio and video content as text.
- **Construct metrics that are relevant to ASPS's 2006 objectives, without jeopardizing longitudinal trending with data collected in 2005.** Revisions to the analysis instrument to keep measures relevant to practitioners in 2006 were made without sacrificing the longitudinal integrity of the data.
 - Tactic:** Update audited circulation and unique monthly visitor values for the sources included in the investigation with data from Bacon's and PRTrak.
 - Tactic:** Add subjects as they emerge in the media in order to identify more timely coverage in addition to evergreen stories.
 - Tactic:** Continue to emphasize share of ink, share of discussion and share of coverage that communicated one or more positive message.
 - Tactic:** Continue to segment data by ASPS' audiences (Broadcast, Business, General/News, Medical, National, Web and Women's).
- **Tailor a report format and schedule that is meaningful for practitioners and management.**
 - Tactic:** Deliver a quarterly report on the 15th of the month following the analysis period, in time to be on the agenda for the Executive Committee's quarterly conference call.

Tactic: Design and deliver a separate executive report that highlights key metrics (share of ink over time, share of discussion over time, share of highly visible coverage over time, share of coverage on key issues, spokesperson message communication and share of audience).

Tactic: Keep the full quarterly report as brief as possible (9 pages), so it can be read quickly and fully by all members of the public relations department.

- **Provide 24/7 access to a dashboard that facilitates ad-hoc reporting of up-to-date information.** A Web dashboard with customizable charts, full drill-down capabilities and compatibility with Microsoft Excel was a cost-effective solution for providing up-to-date information between quarterly reports.

Tactic: Represent all of ASPS' key metrics in online charts, with data available immediately after quality checks are completed on the coder's work.

Tactic: Train the ASPS public relations staff on using online dashboards for data reporting and investigation.

Tactic: Build a dashboard that can be downloaded to Excel with a user-defined analysis period.

Execution

On a daily basis, ASPS delivered qualified and unqualified coverage to KDP&P via e-mail for analysis (qualified articles) or storage (unqualified articles). A coder who had been recruited in 2005 to analyze ASPS coverage was retained and trained on the coding instrument and the new subjects that had already emerged in the data. An example of such an addition was the addition of *face transplant* to the group of tracked, non-exclusive subjects following widespread news coverage of the world's first face transplant in late Q4 2005 and into Q1 2006. Identified later in the investigation were medi-spas, volunteer work and tissue engineering, all of which were included as subjects. All other variables remained valid in their a priori conceptualizations.

Once coding had begun, KDP&P introduced ASPS' public relations staff members to the Web dashboard interface and its operations. KDP&P continued to support ASPS' use of the dashboard, especially as users became more accustomed to customized querying.

In addition to quantitative trends in coverage volume and exposure (opportunities to see) for ASPS and its peer organizations, reporting highlighted the message communication of members of the ASPS Spokesperson Communication Network, coverage during media attention on the FDA's approval of silicone breast implants, ASPS' lawnmower safety initiative, the frequency of coverage in top publications, and citation of studies from *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Journal*. Reporting also grew to include an ad-hoc presentation of message salience in ASPS' press.

While reports were restricted in length (3 page executive summary, 9 page full report), analysts focused on both quantitative trends in key metrics and detailed, qualitative examples of highly visible stories, noteworthy coverage and drivers of messaging, in order to draw the connection between outreach efforts and performance.

Results

An independent coder analyzed 1,512 records from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006. All records were analyzed for publication, reporters, audience reach, spokesperson communication, article type, prominence, tone, communication of any of nine key messages and discussion of any of 23 subjects.

All four quarterly and four executive reports were delivered on time to ASPS, which in turn submitted four data memorandums to its Executive Committee about key message salience in ASPS coverage and exposure. Data from the program was discussed in each of the Executive Committee's quarterly conference calls, and was included in a Presidential presentation to members in July 2006 to demonstrate the department's success in positioning ASPS as a leading source of information about plastic surgery.

Information from this program was used to help formulate the 2007 objectives for the public relations department, to evaluate the performance of the department and, specifically, to evaluate outreach related to *Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Journal* studies.

List of Exhibits

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| EXHIBIT A | Q2 2006 REPORT |
| EXHIBIT B | Q2 2006 EXECUTIVE REPORT |
| EXHIBIT C | Q3 2006 REPORT |
| EXHIBIT D | Q4 2006 EXECUTIVE REPORT |
| EXHIBIT E | PROPOSAL WITH BUDGET AND METHODOLOGY |
| EXHIBIT F | LIST OF SOURCES |
| EXHIBIT G | SEARCH TERMS FOR CONTENT EXTRACTION |
| EXHIBIT H | CODER INSTRUCTIONS |
| EXHIBIT I | 2006 PUBLIC RELATIONS OBJECTIVES FOR ASPS |
| EXHIBIT J | SCREENSHOTS: DIY DASHBOARD FOR ASPS |
| EXHIBIT K | SLIDE FROM JULY 2006 PRESIDENTIAL STUMP SPEECH |
| EXHIBIT L | AGENDA FROM JULY 2006 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL |
| EXHIBIT M | USE OF OBJECTIVES IN PERSONAL EVALUATION |
| EXHIBIT N | TESTIMONIALS FROM ASPS PERSONNEL |
