

CASE STUDY: BANKS 5 ISLAND RUM:

Launching a New Premium White Rum in a Saturated Category

THE CHALLENGE:

The Joseph Banks Corporation retained Bullfrog & Baum to launch the new Banks 5 Island Rum in the U.S. market, with the objective of creating a distinctive brand position and achieving maximum media coverage and trade influence. Banks 5 Island Rum posed significant challenges: In addition to breaking with blending conventions - the brand is the first-ever blend of rums from five different countries - Banks commands a considerably higher price than competitive white rums on the market. The brand also launched in late summer 2010 after most rum stories had already been written for the year.

THE SOLUTION:

Bullfrog & Baum employed a strategy by which it distinguished Banks 5 Island Rum from the competition as a premium *sipping* rum - a characteristic usually reserved for dark, aged rums. In addition, the agency leveraged the brand asset of Jim Meehan, one of the leading mixologists in the U.S. and senior advisor to the brand, who served as a spokesperson for the brand's mixability and commanded the respect of his peers as well as top spirits writers nationwide.

THE PROGRAM:

As a first step - due to the late timing of the launch - B&B sent bottles of Banks 5 Island Rum to leading spirits writers and editors at national outlets. Upon seeding interest amongst key media, the agency produced a brand launch event targeting both media and members of the trade. Through event location, décor and collateral material, the launch event conveyed an overarching theme that Banks reflects a "Voyage of Discovery" - highlighting the five rum-producing regions represented in each bottle, and showcasing its versatility through cocktails created by four of New York's top bartenders, including Jim Meehan. Held in late October, the event offered an island escape from New York fall, garnering more than 80 prominent trade members and spirits/lifestyle media.

In addition to hosting an official launch event, B&B conducted aggressive media outreach to introduce the product to key media. Using Jim Meehan as the expert source, the team set up guided tastings with individual editors and editorial teams in which they were educated on the rum category as a whole and introduced to where Banks fit into the spectrum. As a result, media interest continued to grow and coverage appeared in outlets such as, *Maxim*, *Details*, *TheAtlantic.com* and more.

THE RESULTS:

Through a 9-month program, the PR program for Banks 5 Island achieved than 145M consumer impressions, breaking into *GQ*, *Esquire*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *InStyle*, *Men's Journal*, and spirits industry trade outlets. Elevated brand awareness contributed to Banks' achievement of beating out four other new spirit brands to be named "Best New Product" at the 2011 Tales of the Cocktail, the world's premier cocktail festival in New Orleans.

