

## CASE STUDY: SPRINKLES CUPCAKES HITS THE BIG APPLE

Using Social Media to Create Awareness and Buzz in a Highly Saturated Category

### THE CHALLENGE:

Since opening the world's first cupcake bakery in Beverly Hills in 2005, Sprinkles Cupcakes has inspired long lines of devoted Hollywood celebrity clientele and serious epicureans alike, thus helping to create the nationwide cupcake craze. Bullfrog & Baum was tasked to open Sprinkles 10th bakery on May 13, 2011 in the oversaturated New York City cupcake market.

Initial media seeding and pitching efforts about the bakery's opening were met with tepid media responses, claiming "cupcake fatigue."

### THE SOLUTION:

After examining the brand's traditional approach to bakery openings, B&B revamped strategies to effectively breakthrough to both New York City's tough "new" news media and no-nonsense residents. Following the media's initial lackluster reaction such as, "we're kind of over cupcakes," B&B countered with offering samples of the cupcakes prior to the official opening with the notion of "are you over something sweet and delicious?" B&B hit the pavement with a two-week social media blitz consisting of outreach to tastemakers, influential media outlets and New Yorkers.

To battle "cupcake fatigue", B&B hand-delivered customized cupcakes to media contacts at "TODAY" show, *New York Post*, *Gotham* magazine, "LX.TV", *Teen Vogue* and *O, The Oprah Magazine*. Cupcake "parties" were coordinated with media contacts such as *People Magazine* and *Us Weekly*, with an average of 15 editors in attendance. The drops and parties provided the media with an experience-based introduction to Sprinkles, and face-to-face pitching opportunities. Additionally a select group of influential New Yorkers such as celebrity chef Bobby Flay, Bravo TV's Andy Cohen and TV host Gayle King were chosen to receive gratis cupcakes as well. Each of these personalities has a significant presence on Twitter.

Every cupcake box came with Sprinkles branded sticker that listed Sprinkles Twitter handle (@sprinkles) and Facebook account ([www.facebook.com/sprinkles](http://www.facebook.com/sprinkles)) to encourage comments and photos of their cupcakes.

Sprinkles does not ship its cupcakes, and unless New Yorkers have visited its bakeries in other markets, they have never tasted them. B&B strategized to allow these consumers to be the first to sample Sprinkles Cupcakes in New York, thereby creating a word-of-mouth groundswell to ensure buzz prior to the opening. To execute this, the Sprinklesmobile™, a Sprinkles-branded van, was utilized to distribute free cupcakes over the course of eight days throughout the city. A branded map noting the Sprinklesmobile's location was revealed via Twitter each day. B&B pitched online media outlets the map for publication.

### THE RESULTS:

During the two-week campaign—implemented May 2 to May 13—B&B increased Sprinkles Twitter following by **more than 3,900** from 67,003 to 70,917. The opening in NYC generated countless conversations online and garnered more than **2.6 million impressions**. Results included tweets and videos from influencers such as Chef Bobby Flay, *Bravo TV's* Andy Cohen, *Anderson Cooper 360*, *Allure*, *amNew York*, *Daily News* and *InStyle*.

The momentum of these conversations moved outside of Twitter and resulted in placements with Z-100 "Elvis Duran" and *People* magazine, along with event and marketing opportunities with Macy's and Hearst publications.

On opening day, customers lined the block prior to the bakery's 9AM opening resulting in waits of 30 minutes or more that lasted throughout the day.

