OUR STORY
PUBLIC RELATIONS
FOR THE BOTTOM LINE

“Advertising is saying you’re good. PR is getting someone else to say you’re good.”
Jean-Louis Gassée
WHO WE ARE

Ten years ago in Dallas, on a cocktail napkin over a couple of beers, the 150PR dream was launched. The two to-be partners, one a former reporter, the other raised at a large PR firm and both with a sales foundation and extensive contacts in the media and PR services world, decided to do something different. They would create a PR firm that would specialize in one industry and they would settle for nothing short of best-in-class. Each had worked with the best PR professionals in the world – and the worst – and decided that together, they could do it better.

They would be extensively involved from creation to execution for the right clients. No crazy overhead costs, no taking a week to get the team together, no surprises, no jerks, no BS. They would be nimble, scrappy and cost-effective. Their focus: the bar and restaurant industry. 150PR just needed a shot.

Almost instantly, TGI Fridays™ came calling, saying they wanted an agency that had its brand tip-of-tongue and top of mind every single day. It was the shot they needed and they made it work.

In 150PR’s first project for TGI Fridays, the agency received a Most News Coverage award from the industry’s most coveted trade group. The rest is history, a decade’s worth of helping 20 companies achieve brand-record media coverage results via personalized service and big ideas. 150PR’s business to-date has been solely referrals and recommendations and is primed for growth. If you’re not completely thrilled with your media coverage or your current PR representation, you’d be nuts not to speak with us. We’re that good. Let’s talk.
The results that 150PR achieved were undeniably the best in the industry. For the four years in which 150PR was our agency, TGI Fridays lead the casual dining industry in volume of news coverage and quality of news coverage.

In addition, we were recognized annually with a record number of best-in-class honors ranging from Most News Coverage, Most Engaging, Most Creative and Best Return on Investment; and in 2010, we were awarded Bulldog Reporter’s Top PR Campaign of the Year.

150PR’s unique business model allowed them to keep our brand top-of-mind every single day and I truly believe that was the key differentiator that resulted in our PR successes. It is rare to find an agency that can manage both day-to-day needs while exhibiting such creative energy to garner coveted industry awards.

They are simply that good.

Amy Freshwater, Former VP Public Relations & Crisis Management, Carlson Restaurants Worldwide
HOW WE ROLL

For the past ten years, 150PR has represented several category leaders in the restaurant industry, including TGI Fridays, Applebee’s, On The Border, Shoney’s, Wendy’s, Fox & Hound and Zinburger Wine & Burger Bar, in addition to several other brands in the CDR or family dining segment.

150PR also represents the world’s largest walk-in tub provider, Safe Step, as well as UFC GYM, one of the fastest growing gym concepts in the world.

During its history, the brands being represented by 150PR have led its particular segment in number of news stories, tonality of news, potential audience and ad equivalency; in short: earned media coverage.

From 2006 – 2009, TGI Fridays, despite being half the size as some of its competitors, lead all competitors in every single measurable earned media category. 150PR was a key partner as the brand revitalized its image.

In late 2009, Applebee’s hired 150PR for a two-year exclusive as its PR Agency of Record.

In 2010, the first full year of being represented by 150PR, Applebee’s had the best news coverage year of any brand in casual dining history, a record that still stands.

Despite the success at Applebee’s, 150PR decided it was time for a change and revisited its roots of wanting to find fun, growing concepts, or category leaders in any industry who wanted PR to match their vision.

In 2011, the brand started from scratch again and have spent 5 years having a blast working with clients they seek out, brands they believe in, concepts they trust.

Because of its clients’ success, 150PR has only worked with referrals but is hungry for the right business opportunities. For the first time since it started in 2006, 150PR is looking for the right PR partners in order to help them achieve their business objectives through positive brand awareness and bottom line success.

With a decade of impeccable work under its belt, 150PR is ready for more.

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150PR brings a strong and invaluable sense of news judgment to any PR discussion. They are masters at articulating risk and reward, providing deep strategic insight and delivering a hands-on, get-it-done approach to every initiative. They have a deep commitment to the client and understand how to work within the corporate culture. Plus, they’re fun to work with – and that’s worth a lot.

Nancy Mays, Executive Director, Communications, Applebee’s Services, Inc.
How one restaurant chain responded to disaster
“Our first priority was making sure our team members were OK and to do everything possible to help them,” said Derek Farley, who e-mailed responses from the Applebee’s group in Joplin. “Every team member has been accounted for, but many have lost their homes and/or belongings.”

How restaurant chains handle viral speculation
“My advice is somewhat counterintuitive to marketing,” said Farley. “The best way to handle things like this from a PR perspective is let it ride. If you’re having a winning streak or pitching a perfect game, the last thing you do is start talking about it.”

Secret menus boost buzz at Panera, Taco Bell, McDonald’s
Ah, yes, the coolness quotient. “It’s there to build an elevated level of affinity to a select few,” says restaurant PR guru Derek Farley. But, he says, there can be a downside. “You may build buzz about your brand,” he says, “but I’d rather sell something that appeals to a lot than a few.”

Consumers demanding more mobile meal options
“American diners suffer from an extreme case of impatience and have an insatiable need for convenience that only technology can cure,” says restaurant industry publicist Derek Farley.

Free meals to veterans give restaurants PR boost
“It’s good food meets goodwill,” says Derek Farley, president of restaurant PR chain 150PR. “There are 24 million veterans and troops, and they all remember who feeds them for free on their day of respect.”

Pizza Hut deal gets you a $5.55 pizza
“If the consumer needs something that gives them permission to experiment with a brand, $5 is the magic number,” says Farley. “It is consistently the threshold that reinforces the idea of a deal.”

Halloween freebies is growing restaurant trend
“Restaurants are like ghost towns on Halloween,” says Derek Farley, a restaurant industry PR guru. Much like Labor Day and July 4th, Halloween is a holiday that’s not very restaurant-friendly, he says.

Fast-food deals go long and wide in January
“The challenge is to convince the consumer that the deal is so good that it simply cannot be passed up,” says Derek Farley, president of 150PR, a restaurant specialty public relations firm, who notes that many big restaurant chains typically see sales drop about 3% in January vs. an average month. “Dining is the first and easiest thing to resist when you’re being cautious with your wallet and your gut.”
» TGI Fridays was 150PR’s first client

» In the six months of the partnership, 150PR made every mistake in the book

» Over the next 3½ years, TGI Fridays experienced the best news coverage in the history of the brand, and dominated brands 2x and 3x its size in positive news coverage

» In its first full project, Right Portion, Right Price, 150PR led TGI Fridays to a national Most News Coverage award; it was an award across all industries and all classes of competition

» During the partnership, TGI Fridays also won Most Creative Campaign, Best Reaction to Breaking News, Best Return on Investment and Most Engaging, all for separate campaigns

» 150PR turned what had been an internal competition (World Bartender Championship) into a public event with national and local stories, even an Associated Press video feature

» In 2010, with the Punt Challenge, 150PR created and executed a campaign and TGI Fridays walked away with the Best Overall PR Campaign of the Year
» 150PR followed Applebee’s president Mike Archer, who was the former president of TGI Fridays; after 4 years with TGI Fridays – and three CMOs – 150PR felt it was time for a change and we loved his leadership

» 150PR inherited several second-year programs such as Unbelievably Great Tasting and Under 550 Calorie entrées and its Veterans Day initiative, yet still increased year-over-year coverage for both

» In 2011, the first full year of the partnership, Applebee’s experienced the best news coverage year of any brand in casual dining history, a mark that still stands

» Applebee’s saw a 55% increase in overall news coverage from 2010 to 2012 with 150PR as its AOR

» By expanding its one-day Veterans Day initiative into a year-round effort via The Thank You Movement, Applebee’s was awarded with the Most Creative Campaign of 2012 by an industry expert source
150PR began working with CUPS before the first location was opened in 2010. Now with 25 location and 45 more committed via area development agreements, 150PR continues to support all new store openings including all franchise locations.

Secured national stories highlighting CUPS key attributes that make the concept different that all the others – beach-theme, club-like atmosphere, electric dance music.

The Exchange, a popular Yahoo Finance blog, named CUPS as one of “The Most Popular Fast-Food Outlets You Haven’t Heard Of (Yet)”

As a result of The Exchange story and additional national stories, CUPS received more than 100 qualified leads for franchise opportunities and secured several area development agreements.
Zinburger’s owner, The Briad Group, asked 150PR to assist in the opening of their first licensed location in 2010. Extensive coverage including a New York Times feature story helped make Zinburger stand out among the growing better burger concepts.

Nearly 6 years later, 150PR recently assisted with Zinburger’s 12th new store opening.

As part of a recent opening in Atlanta, 150PR organized a red carpet event with more than 500 people in attendance and sold $200 VIP cards to raise $12,500 for a local charity.

With 150PR as its AOR, Zinburger was named one of the top 10 brands to look out for in 2013 from Burger Business.
150PR’s president grew up on Shoney’s in West Virginia and thought his agency could help the brand improve its image

In the three years of the partnership, Shoney’s has seen a 236% increase in earned television coverage

Shoney’s experienced a 211% increase in print and online coverage

Perhaps most importantly, the brand went from 52% positive tonality to 92 percent tonality in two years

The brand received more than 350 independent news clips, an average of 100 per year, 4 positive mentions in USA today or a more than 1 a year and $1.5M in equivalent advertising value each year.

Shoney’s also received coverage of all new store openings during 150PR’s representation
» 150PR’s smallest client – 2 units; we agreed to the partnership because, well, we loved them

» Showed immediate return with several features in its hometown newspaper, The Charlotte Observer and on several network affiliates in Charlotte and beyond

» Even landed JJ’s in a USA Today feature

» In the two years of our relationship, the brand was named to Fast Casual’s Movers & Shakers list TWICE, its PR/Marketing Campaign was named Top 10 and it is the only Hot Dog/Sausage campaign to make the list
AROOGA’S

» 150PR met Arooga’s while representing NTN Buzztime and the up-and-coming sports bar and grill concept liked our work so much that they hired us independently from Buzztime

» On one of our first projects, we turned a local Best Wings in Harrisburg (the brand’s hometown) story into a philanthropic event, providing hundreds of free chicken wings to a local soup kitchen that had been recently vandalized

» The soup kitchen donation alone generated news stories from all four local network affiliates, all of whom ran the story more than once; the estimated EAV for the story was in excess of $25,000

» Brand is now growing, signed a 15-unit franchise development deal with the Mohegan Sun

» Since partnering with 150PR, Arooga’s has become inarguably one of the fastest growing restaurant concepts in the country, with 4 franchise agreements with partners for a brand total of 100 units either built or under contract

» Arooga’s is perhaps best known for being selected as America’s Next Top Restaurant Franchise, beating more than 250 entrants from 36 states in a program co-sponsored by Sysco Foods and The Franchise Edge in a nationwide search to find an independent restaurant to become the next great restaurant franchise
ON THE BORDER

» More than 350 positive television mentions
» 94% positive tonality in coverage (industry average is 68%)
» More than $500,000 in estimated publicity value (TV alone)
» Ranked #1 among 80 chains for Veterans Day coverage
» Dominated National Margarita Day coverage among CDRs (89% of all articles)
» $23,000 raised for various charities during grand openings

» More than 1400 grand opening RSVPs to 8 events
» Veterans Day Sales comp net sales up 26%
» National Margarita Day comp net sales up 14.5%
» Cinco de Mayo comp net sales up 242.4%
» National Tequila Day comp net sales up 24.2%
» Official Restaurant of National Margarita Day
HICKORY TAVERN

» 150PR is Hickory Tavern’s first public relations agency ever

» The relationship started paying off immediately; in the first 90 days, 150PR has generated more equivalent advertising value than the brand had ever experienced on its own.

» 150PR created several campaigns specific to its hometown Carolina Panthers’ Super Bowl run and landed the brand on network television – earned spots – every week during its run

» Created buzz, media attention and increased traffic during March Madness, promoting a doctor’s note citing excuses for missing work that could be redeemed for a free appetizer

» Oversaw the promotion and VIP nights for Hickory Tavern’s newest location in Cary, NC, resulting in extensive local media coverage and more than 200 attendees at the VIP nights
HWY 55 BURGERS, SHAKES & FRIES

» As is the case with Hickory Tavern, 150PR is Hwy 55’s first public relations agency in the 25-year history of the company

» In the first four months of PR representation, 150PR secured earned placements in several high-profile industry publications catered to franchising – the company’s objective

» Hwy 55 was also featured in closely watched publications such as Full Service Restaurant magazine and Burger Business

» Provided PR support for all new store openings including creating a grand opening strategy incorporating Hwy 55’s famous 55 Challenge burger eating contest

» Secured media coverage including TV appearances promoting the Charleston Chop sandwich for National Southern Food Day

» Created and promoted the Beamer Frank, a specially-created hot dog honoring Virginia Tech’s outgoing football coach Frank Beamer as part of the Hwy 55 Blacksburg, VA opening. Coverage included stories in national sports publications
SAFE STEP

» 150PR’s first non-restaurant client, we took on the account to assist a former restaurant contact with his new company

» Within three months, designed a national program of giving called Safe Step Cares, in which we identify needy individuals who would benefit from the tub but who are unable to afford it

» Among others, we’ve provided tubs to a former quadriplegic who was hit by an uninsured drunk driver, three teenage girls with Friedreich’s Ataxia, another with juvenile arthritis, a Canadian veteran, and two tubs to a low to-no assisted living facility whose bathing facilities were in shambles

» The program won a national PR award as the Top 15 PR program of 2014 and Safe Step Cares consistently receives network television coverage in the markets in which it donates

» In the past two years, Safe Step Cares has given away more than a tub a month, 36 total and has generated positive news coverage for all giveaways
150PR was hired by UFC GYM Franchise Company to provide public relations support for their quickly expanding franchise system. UFC GYM, known for its unique Train Different approach that combines the world of mixed martial arts (MMA) and fitness, is one of the fast growing fitness companies in the world.

» 150PR has promoted soft openings and grand openings for all new franchise locations. Averaging 5-6 new openings a month, 150PR has generated media coverage in all markets including daily newspapers, magazines, radio stations and televisions stations in major markets such as San Antonio, Portland, Boston, Edmonton, Toronto and Los Angeles.

» UFC GYM has seen record sales during the Grand Openings since 150PR was hired.

» Based on 150PR’s recommendation, UFC GYM offered a free Father’s Day fitness camp for dads and up to three guests. More than 30 media stories resulted including being featured in Time Magazine as well as several television segments.
I've been working with 150PR for more than 5 years and I've truly enjoyed every minute. The Briad Group has a total of 9 brands and it’s critical that our service partners have a complete understanding of each and every one. We need a PR partner that can change hats very quickly. 150PR has a great way of staying true to our PR strategies while delivering out of the box thinking on our non-traditional projects. They have assisted with the traditional PR needs, unique promotions and gone above and beyond with relationship and community development. They’re a fun bunch to work with.

Kim Gouch, former Chief Marketing Officer, The Briad Group
For twenty years, On The Border did not have a PR agency. We talked 150PR into a one-time project, something they haven’t done before or since but we hired them immediately after the project to become our PR AOR. They just get it. They are nimble, scrappy and outright determined to outperform any objective we have. For National Margarita Day, we served them a dud in terms of an offer and a year later, we owned a holiday and saw a huge sales increase for a one-day made up holiday. Now, that’s amazing.

Coleen Rand, former Senior Marketing Officer, On The Border