

Live Wire Strategic Communications, LLC increased recognition of Virginia Hospital Center through an aggressive media relations campaign, elevated its perception among consumers as the region's healthcare providers and positioned ambassadors as thought leaders within the healthcare industry.

Company Overview

Virginia Hospital Center, a Magnet® hospital, is a 394-bed not-for-profit, teaching facility offering comprehensive healthcare and multiple, independently recognized Centers of Excellence.

Campaign Overview

In the tumultuous 24-hour news environment that has accompanied the global COVID-19 pandemic, business leaders, especially those in the healthcare industry, have had a responsibility to their communities, clients and stakeholders to disseminate accurate information in a timely fashion. Balancing speed and accuracy requires a trusted partner with the experience and talent to navigate today's challenging media environment. Virginia Hospital Center turned to Live Wire to meet several goals:

- /// Internal Communications – Develop effective messaging for VHC staff to share the latest updates to hospital procedures and boost employee morale;
- /// Thought Leadership – Demonstrate VHC's role as a leader in the region's COVID-19 response, securing interviews with top-tier media outlets and creating dynamic video content; and
- /// Hospital News – Showcase the hospital's creative approach in adapting events to comply with the latest COVID safety regulations through targeted outreach, spotlight profiles and post-event photo coverage.

Campaign Objectives

As COVID-19 made its way to the United States, Live Wire worked with key executives at Virginia Hospital Center to gain an in-depth understanding of the Hospital's response strategy, internal resources, key messages, market position and business goals. Live Wire analyzed and synthesized that information into an extensive PR campaign with the opportunity for true impact.

The business objectives of the campaign were to position Virginia Hospital Center as a top hospital in the region, outperform other local hospitals in terms of pandemic response and innovation, nurture and retain human capital, and enhance communications with internal and external audiences. Communications objectives included expanding outreach to achieve maximum exposure to reach key stakeholders (community, patients, doctors, nurses, partners, board, etc.), increasing digital market presence, increasing the effectiveness of internal communications and engaging public/media relations.

Campaign Strategies

Based on a comprehensive analysis of Virginia Hospital Center and its competitors, Live Wire recommended the following strategies to accomplish the defined PR objectives:

- /// Build relationships with key reporters, editors and producers covering the novel coronavirus at local and national media outlets and specialized health and fitness trade publications to educate them about VHC's initiatives;
- /// Engage reporters, editors and producers from targeted outlets to pitch and secure compelling stories about VHC's medical staff, patients, and innovative practices for local consumer audiences; and
- /// Research and secure high-value print and broadcast editorial and feature opportunities highlighting programs, facilities, corporate philanthropy and thought leadership.

Campaign Tactics

Live Wire developed and implemented a comprehensive strategic public relations campaign for Virginia Hospital Center that:

- Created synergies for a centralized communications campaign;
- Analyzed industry, competitors and all the players' perceived positions and share of voice;
- Reviewed key findings from discovery session analysis and competitive media analysis to solidify campaign direction;
- Brought journalistic expertise to create powerful and memorable messages and test to ensure messages are strong, unique and possess the ability to capture attention;
- Identified audience, outlets and key influencers in relevant markets and industries
- Established an outreach strategy; and
- Evaluated existing media collateral, recommend refinements and create new materials as needed.

Campaign Results

Since March of 2020, Live Wire delivered the following tangible results:

- Secured **379 media placements** through articles in print and online outlets as well as TV and radio segments highlighting Virginia Hospital Center's coronavirus response and role as a community leader;
- Supported VHC's launch of the first drive-through COVID-19 testing site in the area, preparing hospital and county executives for live press conferences and **earning 117 media placements** to encourage public support for the hospital's testing efforts;
- Promoted three innovative measures taken by the hospital to combat COVID-19 securing **18 media placements** highlighting VHC's early adoption of Abbott Rapid testing and their enrollment in clinical trials;
- Assisted employee retention and engagement efforts via positive internal email messaging to keep employee morale high so that Virginia Hospital Center is one of only a few area hospitals not currently under-staffed;
- Generated **88 media placements** related to donations and community support for the hospital; and
- Placed key stories with Spanish-speaking media outlets and produced videos for social media platforms to provide valuable medical information to Arlington's high-risk Hispanic population.

"Live Wire has elevated Virginia Hospital Center's recognition in the greater Washington area through media placements in print and television and they help us increase our thought leadership value by securing top awards and honors. Their commitment and high-energy approach continue to drive us to new heights."

Maryanne Boster
Director of Corporate Communications
Virginia Hospital Center