



**Mercury Award  
Category 7 –  
Marketing Consumer Products**

Kelly Hamilton  
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*Shagging in the Carolinas*

SCPRSA  
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**Mercury Award Submission • Submitted by Kelly Hamilton, Arcadia Publishing**

**Category Entry:** Marketing Consumer Products

**Consumer Product Entry:** *Shagging in the Carolinas*

**Introduction:** In June 2006, Arcadia Publishing released its first book on American dance culture, *Shagging in the Carolinas*. Unlike Arcadia's popular Images of America series, *Shagging in the Carolinas* was a unique product that targeted a broader, two state market area of diverse populations. To spur and maintain sales of the book, an aggressive marketing and public relations plan was executed—ensuring the overall sales goal of 3,000 copies would be reached within 3 months. The main objectives were 1) to launch a book tour in targeted states with a minimum goal of 10 signings per state 2) to build awareness of *Shagging in the Carolinas* by generating one million impressions within the first 3 months.

**Research:** Extensive research was conducted prior to commissioning the author 'Fessa John Hook. Research included reviewing if 'Fessa Hook was the appropriate author to write the book, as well as reviewing if a book on shagging would be a viable product to take to market. An approval research committee, consisting of five executive management team members, examined all submitted research materials and granted approval to move forward with the book. The last component of research was provided by the author in the form of a marketing questionnaire, which serves as the final tool sales and marketing team members use to build the execution strategy.

While commissioning the book, Arcadia Publishing gathered research that indicated two public misconceptions needed to be changed in order to achieve the sales goal. The overall marketing message addressed and successfully altered the public's perception that 1) the history of shagging solely evolved in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 2) the history of shagging was not related to their town or heritage.

**Planning and Execution:** Planning was based on two overarching strategies: 1) to saturate as many markets as possible with advertising, public relations activities, and book information to promote sales and prevent an excess of returns 2) to strategically relate *Shagging in the Carolinas* to the 45 cities it mentions. Other key factors included: the date of the book's release, the target audience, and the marketing message for the product. The book's release date—June 19, 2006—directly correlated with the beginning of shag season. The target audiences were residents of the Carolinas and members of all associated shag club. Specialized appeal messages included: the local angle of shagging to 45 specific communities; the evolution of shag 30 years earlier than previously thought; and the release of the new book.

Execution included successfully implementing the following tactics: 1) direct mailing campaign to 500+ book stores and retail outlets; 2) media blitz to 1,400+ media contacts; 3) individualized media kit and review copy mailing to 250+ targeted media contacts; 4) fundraising direct mail campaign to all associated shag clubs; 5) coop advertising campaign in national chain book stores; 6) book launch celebration; 7) creation of the book's own website; 8) extensive book signing tour in 2 states; and 9) a community involvement campaign.

**Budget:** A standard budget for the typical Arcadia book is less than \$100 total. Because the success of the book depended on marketing, a significant increase was made in the budget. The budget for *Shagging in the Carolinas* was based on the overall sales goal of 3,000 copies. Marketing was allocated \$1.50 per book ( per 3,000 sales goal), for a total of \$4,500. This budget was used to fund all marketing and public relations tactics. Total budget spent was \$4,321.45.

**Goals Achieved:**

After just 2 weeks of being published, sales exceeded the 3 month goal of 3,000 copies with 3,982 copies sold. In the next three months, an additional 3,328 copies were sold. Overall sales in 3 months reached 7,310 copies; 243% over the goal. Sales were a direct result of marketing of extensive public relations campaign that resulted in 46 print media hits, 27 radio interviews, 8 television appearances, 17 website hits, more than 3 million print impressions, and 39 book signings across 6 states in the Southeast. The sales and marketing of *Shagging in the Carolinas* was an unprecedented success for Arcadia Publishing.

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