

A stylized, light-colored silhouette of a person running, captured in a dynamic mid-stride pose. The figure is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the page, with its legs extended forward and back, suggesting movement. The entire image is enclosed within a thin, dark grey rectangular border.

**Silver Wing Award
Category 1 –
Media Relations**

Rawle Murdy Associates, Inc.
*Wild Dunes Resort Media Relations
Campaign*

SCPRSA
2007 Mercury Awards
www.scprsa.org

WILD DUNES RESORT MEDIA RELATIONS CAMPAIGN
2007 Silver Wing Awards Submission- 1.Media Relations

PURPOSE: Two significant development projects were set to change the face of Wild Dunes Resort in 2006: The Sweetgrass Pavilion, a new conference and events facility; and The Village at Wild Dunes, new luxury condominiums. The twist: The Resort brand had been “lost” and needed to be reenergized to boost sales. Our overarching charge was to use media relations to accomplish the following in the first 6-12 months:

- 1) Create awareness and excitement around the launch of The Sweetgrass Pavilion both locally, regionally and among key trade associations, aiming to secure 2–4 placements in targeted media
- 2) Introduce and generate interest and inquiries about The Village at Wild Dunes, aiming to secure 1 media placement per key city in each of the feeder states
- 3) Create awareness of Wild Dunes with a broader audience—in the right way and with the right message, aiming to secure 1 noteworthy placement in a mainstream national publication
- 4) Generate local buzz, aiming to secure a local television partner at no/low cost in the hopes of generating 3 broadcast segments to educate locals about Wild Dunes’ golf
- 5) Increase awareness of shoulder season offerings, aiming to secure 1 noteworthy placement per quarter on couples and/or golf getaways and 1 noteworthy placement related to holiday packages

RESEARCH: A rebranding strategy meeting was called and, since the budget did not allow for formal primary research, resulted in an aggressive study of a variety of existing information pertinent to Wild Dunes. The key PR takeaway: Wild Dunes’ primary differentiating factor—the “ownable” attribute among resorts—was that it offers a unique mix of relaxed luxury and uncomplicated spontaneity.

PLANNING AND EXECUTION: Our media relations strategy was four-fold:

- Reach key decision-makers in the business and events industries
- Reach the markets that ranked highest in Resort guest history
- Introduce the re-focused brand of Wild Dunes to national media for broader exposure
- Reinvigorate and educate the local market and increase traffic in the shoulder seasons with attention-getting promotions

Tactics included a clever media mailer, a “look book,” taking the show on the road to neighboring markets, utilizing product placement for an “in” with dream publication *SELF Magazine*, developing a local “Worst Golfer” contest and creating unique travel packages.

BUDGET: We accomplished our charge within our existing monthly retainer of only \$3,500.

EVALUATION: We successfully reached and surpassed our goals within every objective. The campaign, driven by media relations, resulted in **estimated media impressions of more than 124 million**, creating never-before-seen exposure for the Resort on a top-tier national level.

- 1) **Objective 1:** Secured stories in top meeting publications and U.S. dailies including *Associations Now*, *Successful Meetings*, *Small Market Meetings*, *Eventline*, *Event Solutions*, *Meetings & Conventions* and *The Washington Examiner*, with **estimated impressions of more than 1.5 million**.
- 2) **Objective 2:** Secured feature stories in key market newspapers including *The Charlotte Observer*, *The South Carolina Business Journal*, *The Washington Examiner*, *The Charleston Regional Business Journal*, *The Post & Courier* and *The State*, with **estimated impressions of more than 2.2 million**.
- 3) **Objective 3:** Pitched and secured a partnership with *SELF Magazine* that resulted in the following national exposure for Wild Dunes Resort: a prize page in the magazine (circulation = 1,420,543), a presence on Self.com (403,994 visitors per month), promotion in the Self.com "Reach Your Goals" newsletter (sent out weekly to more than 150,000 participants) and e-mail blasts to more than 1 million readers, with **estimated impressions of more than 6 million**.
- 4) **Objective 4:** Our “Worst Golfer” contest generated an estimated \$10,650 in earned media coverage and total local viewership of approximately 152,000 viewers—**effectively highlighting Wild Dunes Resort as a local golf destination**.
- 5) **Objective 5:** Our proprietary travel packages resulted in several hits in top “dream” publications including *Travel + Leisure Golf*, *USA Today*, *Forbes.com*, *Travel Agent Magazine*, *CNN.com*, *Newsday*, *New York Daily News*, *MSNBC.com* and *AOL Travel*, with **estimated impressions of more than 115 million**.