

Witherspoon Case Study



Challenge

Performing Arts Fort Worth, under the leadership of prominent businessman and philanthropist Ed Bass, hired Witherspoon to produce a campaign aimed at raising financial support for the construction of a world-class performance hall. Persuading donors both large and small that their gifts were needed was complicated by the fact that the main endorsers of the project were a well-known billionaire and his wealthy parents and siblings.

Strategy

In order to raise \$60 million to build the performance hall and position it as an entertainment venue for every member of the community, fund-raising efforts were implemented in phases. The first targeted corporations and individuals capable of making major gifts. The second was directed to residents of Fort Worth and Tarrant County generally, and emphasized the importance of each and every gift, no matter how small.

Solution

Private meetings for prospective large donors provided opportunities to distribute case-statement brochures and videos (complete with original music) spelling out how future generations would benefit from the hall. For potential givers of more modest means, radio PSAs, outdoor boards, bus benches and newspaper/magazine ads were created. A groundbreaking and outdoor concert were staged on the future site of the hall, giving attendees an opportunity to witness the hall's "unveiling."

Results

Media coverage was extensive. Every TV-network affiliate aired a story on one or more of its newscasts, Ed Bass was interviewed on radio, and leading North Texas newspapers and magazines devoted substantial space to the hall and the campaign to pay for it. The \$60 million goal was far surpassed, enabling construction of a large parking garage and other extras. Most importantly, the completed hall was enthusiastically embraced by North Texans of all ages and income levels.



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