

1. CASE STUDY



We first began our work with a national travel agency, focusing on the destination wedding segment, in the beginning of 2015, and in our first year together enjoyed 55 media placements - nationally, regionally and in niche publications.

In our second year with the group, we developed an aggressive publicity plan that would focus primarily on content creation and leveraging the extensive media relationships we had made in the wedding, lifestyle and travel industries. Early in the year, however, it was evident that the Zika Virus would stop us in our tracks. Suddenly, it was the primary focus of most travel-related stories, and published reports showed a steady decline in interest in certain important regions as a result.

Action was necessary to mitigate the potential damage due to Zika, so we studied it extensively. We became familiar with the impacted regions and how the virus would affect our client whose primary partnerships were with properties in Mexico, Central America and South America. We had a "Zika snapshot" on hand that we could review at a moment's notice.

strategy 1

We focused on regions of the world not impacted by Zika. The client's strong presence in Mexico, Central and South America would clearly make ours an uphill battle unless we changed the conversation and focused on less statistically popular, and Zika-free, destinations. They needed to be attractive to the media as well.

We pitched, and subsequently worked with the Knot, the world's leading wedding website, on a roundup of castles where couples could marry, all of which had exclusive partnerships with our client. We pitched and produced a number of themed articles for their blog, Roam, like great spots for history buffs and new, emerging destination wedding locations. This gave us the freedom to include some of the already popular locales while exploring lesser known regions and properties with which our client still worked.

Some of our articles were less subtle, at the request of the editors, such as an About.com article we pitched about the top non-beach destinations where couples could marry.

strategy 2

One of the biggest concerns couples had was inviting their wedding party and guests to regions that had Zika. We created a whole new angle that focused on modern elopements. We took on a storytelling approach. No longer were elopements to be relegated to dashing off in secret without telling a soul. Now you could have a custom elopement and still celebrate at home with loved ones! We endeavored to demonstrate that you could still enjoy a destination celebration for two. Our goal was to retain some of our client's original prospective customers. We had success with this approach with multiple media outlets including the Huffington Post, Perfect Wedding Guide, SheFinds.com and Catersource, among others.

strategy 3

Lending expert commentary to destination wedding and honeymoon articles was a pillar of our original plan, but with the Zika outbreak, it was clear we would need to expand this commentary to more evergreen topics. One of our agency's competitive advantages is that the majority of our team has worked in weddings – in total we have a collective decade of planning experience prior to OFD. With that in mind, we were able to fill in the knowledge blanks of our clients, assisting them as we expanded our contributions to more general topics. Using this strategy, we enjoyed ongoing national press with such noted media outlets as Bridal Guide, the Knot, Brides.com, Travel Pulse, About.com, and other high caliber sites.

results

Our efforts resulted in 96 media placements in 2016, up 74% from the year before. Our client received the coveted Travel Weekly Magellan Award for Agency Innovation and was recognized for becoming a well-respected thought leader in the tourism and wedding industry. These successes allowed our client to position itself as the top destination wedding brand to provide travel and planning services while also leading in expert commentary.