

WRITING INSTRUMENTS MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION BRING BACK THE LOST ART OF HANDWRITING

OVERVIEW

Does anyone write by hand anymore? Due to advances in technology and the increasing popularity of digital devices, penmanship and handwriting has seen a decline over the last 15 years.

The Writing Instruments Manufacturers Association, better known as WIMA, is a non-profit organization that was established in 1943 to bring together the voices of the pen, marker and mechanical pencil industries with the purpose of promoting the overall interest of writing instruments and handwriting. Since its conception, WIMA's challenge has been to bring handwriting back to the forefront of people's minds and remind them of its value and benefits. WIMA approached WordHampton PR (WHPR) with the objective of generating awareness of the organization, building its brand visibility and sparking the conversation about handwriting again throughout the United States. Our mission, that we chose to accept, has been to help bring back the lost art of handwriting.

RESEARCH/SITUATION ANALYSIS

Drawing interest to the lost art of handwriting was initially challenging. We determined that connecting with audiences across the country in a way that played off of every day "things" as they related to handwriting would be most impactful. To do so, we developed a social media strategy to keep the conversation of the brand consistent through the year while also focusing on one main event annually: National Handwriting Day, which was established in 1977, and happens to be John Hancock's birthday.

PLANNING/EXECUTION

Once we determined our approach through social media, we carefully considered a selection of current events to capitalize on that could be related to handwriting. We chose the Presidential Inauguration and National Handwriting Day (NHD).

The 40th Anniversary of NHD not only fell on a weekend day, but also took a backseat to the pending Presidential Inauguration. Leading up to NHD we explored a variety of the historical elements of presidential elections with our main focus on the handwriting analysis of each presidential candidate. We hired an experienced analyst to provide her insight on the leadership style of each candidate based on their handwriting and prior to Election Day shared teasers of her findings. On Inauguration Day we shared the complete analysis of the current president's handwriting as he began his tenure.

In honor of the 41st Anniversary, we chose to focus our efforts on the official recognition of NHD, January 23rd. Months leading up to the monumental day, we explored a variety of subjects via social media and their relation to handwriting, as we fine-tuned our strategy to make the coming NHD the best one yet. Our newfound partners, Congressman Paul Tonko (New York 20th Congressional District) and Congressman Leonard Lance (New Jersey 7th Congressional District), introduced a bi-partisan congressional resolution, H.res.654, expressing support for the designation of January 23rd as National Handwriting Day. The resolution emphasized the educational benefits of handwriting for children, as well as the cognitive development and motor skills benefit. To officially introduce the resolution, Congressman Paul Tonko visited Rosendale Elementary School in his district where he spoke about his passion for handwriting, emphasized the importance of education, shared about his job and helped the students with their "John Hancocks." As well, the Congressman along with WIMA representative, gifted the students with writing materials.

For both the 40th and 41st Anniversaries of National Handwriting Day, press releases were distributed on PR Newswire to maximize exposure. In celebration of the 40th, we shared the findings of our analyst who indicated the sort of leader the president would be as determined by his style of handwriting. In honor of the 41st Anniversary, we released the news of the pending congressional resolution followed by a post-event distribution with images from congressman's visit to Rosendale Elementary.

RESULTS/EVALUATION

The 40th Anniversary of National Handwriting Day generated more than 100 press hits that collectively reached more than 245 million online readers, including outlets such as TIME; Forbes; CBS; and NBC. The 41st Anniversary of National Handwriting Day generated over 60 press hits that collectively reached more than 285 million online readers, and a new congressional resolution has been introduced to officially recognize National Handwriting Day from coast to coast.

The WIMA Facebook business page continues to serve as the voice of the brand with a consistent presence. Carefully curated content has sparked new conversations, divulging from the overarching theme of handwriting and writing utensils, while dovetailing off of everyday “things,” and continues to draw the attention of the masses. To aid the growth of the page and increase our reach we have dedicated \$500 per month to Facebook advertising, which helped gain almost 14K fans.

Together, each facet of this campaign has connected with specific and different markets. Within those markets the seed of “bringing back the lost of art of handwriting” has been planted.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

40th Anniversary of National Handwriting Day

- Press Hits: <https://wordhamptonpublicrelations.coveragebook.com/b/8c15802d>
- Press Hits: <https://wordhamptonpublicrelations.coveragebook.com/b/dfa5ac68>

41st Anniversary of National Handwriting Day

- Congressional Resolution: <https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hres654>