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## Henkel makes a new idea stick

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They love their Duct Tape in Avon, OH, headquarters of Duck Products, a division of Henkel, which holds the Duct Tape trademark.

Each year, Henkel is the title sponsor of the Avon Heritage Duct Tape Festival, billed as a three-day, outdoor event to “celebrate Duct Tape, its enthusiasts, and its wacky and fun uses.”

To help drive attendance to the festival and draw media coverage this year, organizers decided to incorporate a theme that was not the most obvious choice – pirates.

### Strategy

The strategy was to develop a theme-based marketing plan to reinvigorate the yearly event. Liggett Stashower, Henkel's PR agency, executed a local and national media relations campaign that was targeted to broadcast, online, and print, says Lisa Schwan, AE at Liggett.

“Each year, we strive to incorporate something fresh and original,” adds Brian Bloom, VP at Liggett. “In past years, we discovered that larger-than-life-sized Duct Tape sculptures piqued the interest of festivalgoers of all ages. So, we determined that... a theme... from the sculptures to the floats, and throughout the fairgrounds, would provide a new and unexpected twist.”

### Tactics

The team mailed pirate-themed treasure chest press kits that included gold coins, jewels, a miniature telescope, a multimedia CD, a treasure map, a press release, and vibrantly colored Duct Tape to the media.

One day before the event, the agency went to four local TV stations and hand-delivered wooden replica treasure chests filled with mock treasures and a treasure map.

“We also set up numerous radio and TV interviews with the local student artist who created all of the Duct Tape sculptures for the festival,” Schwan says.

## Results

Organizers did not track previous attendance, but Schwan noted an increase, as more than 40,000 people attended throughout Father's Day weekend.

“Each year, we look... to keep Duct Tape enthusiasts coming back,” says Patti Sack, communications manager of Henkel. “This year, the pirate theme was exciting and fun for all ages, and really helped achieve record results.”

Print coverage included local publications (*The Plain Dealer* and *Cleveland Magazine*), as well as 17 national placements (including the *Atlanta-Journal Constitution* and *Chicago Tribune*).

## Future

Liggett will also work on the festival planned for next year.

“A theme will be integrated into the 2009 Avon Heritage Duct Tape Festival, but we have not yet determined what it will be,” Schwan says.

## PRWeek's View

*Duct Tape is literally the tie that binds Avon, an integral part of the city's identity, and a major economic driver.*

*The festival provided Henkel with the platform to strengthen its relationship with the Avon community, while producing plenty of wacky, novelty photo-ops that culture editors love – Duct Tape sculptures, parade floats, and even a prom dress competition.*

*Not stuck to the same playbook, the decision to incorporate the pirate theme shows that when re-energizing an annual effort, it helps to think outside the box.*

**PR team:** *Henkel Corp. (Avon, OH) and Liggett Stashower (Cleveland)*

**Campaign:** *Avon Heritage Duct Tape Festival*

**Duration:** *January–June 2008*

**Budget:** *\$74,000*