



## **CAMPAIGNS: Economic Development - Upstate NY looks to lure city folks**

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Client: Central New York Regional Compact (Syracuse, NY)  
PR Team: MRA (Syracuse, NY)  
Campaign: "What Not to Pack When Moving to the Syracuse Region"  
Time Frame: March 8, 2001  
Budget: dollars 3,750

After the Central New York Regional Compact received a grant from state Sen. John DeFrancisco to launch a campaign to attract attention and entice businesses to relocate to the Syracuse area, it turned to its PR agency, MRA, for ideas.

Established a couple of years ago by the Greater Syracuse Chamber of Commerce, the Compact focuses on promoting economic prosperity and maintaining a high quality of life in Cayuga, Cortland, Oneida, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego counties.

### Strategy

What better way to publicize the small-town virtues of the up-and-coming Upstate New York region than to vilify the ugly, everyday realities of life in the big city? That was the reasoning behind a guerrilla turn-and-burn campaign.

"The campaign was designed to get persuasive information in front of the target audience," says Marti Bledsoe, the MRA account executive heading the account. "It was also intended to generate media coverage, which could be merchandised back in Syracuse to foster pride in the innovative way the region is marketing itself locally and outside the area."

Account representatives at the Syracuse-based PR agency came up with a novel idea: a checklist-style flyer that looked like a moving list, detailing what a person would need to leave behind when relocating to the area.

"The lists detailed items you no longer need when you move to the Syracuse area, like ear-plugs (sirens won't keep you up all night) and a headhunter (good companies will be beating down your door)," says Bledsoe.

Now all they needed was a venue to distribute it. Enter the NCAA Big East Men's Basketball Tournament. The event, held annually at Madison Square Garden in midtown Manhattan, draws thousands of visitors from

cities up and down the eastern seaboard. MRA representatives realized that this popular event would provide its client with the venue it needed to pass out its cleverly presented information.

"Only the client thought the Big East Tournament had already passed," says Bledsoe. Once informed that, in fact, the event's tip-off was actually still days away on March 8, Compact officials agreed to launch the campaign on March 2.

#### Tactics

Flyers were distributed at subway stops and other locations outside the Garden.

MRA also mounted an e-mail effort to notify media outlets in Syracuse and New York about the campaign. In addition to the humorous content, the flyer included the Web addresses of three job recruitment sites as well as a general Syracuse-related site.

#### Results

More than 7,500 "unpacking lists" were distributed. On the media front, the e-mail campaign drew limited attention - although a front-page article with a full-color photo ran in the following day's issue of the Syracuse Post-Standard. The article enabled Compact leaders to raise the profile of their efforts and discuss future initiatives.

#### Future

Compact officials are huddling with MRA folks to devise similar guerrilla tactics. Media relations efforts for the region will continue through June 2001.