HI-TEC®

Phibian™ Collection

Hi-Tec Develops
Shoes Fit for a Cause

LEAVE NO TRACE
OUTDOOR ETHICS

Get Up. Get Out!™

What ever happened to "go play outside and be home before the streetlights come on"? What about chasing fireflies, skipping rocks and digging for clay? It's no surprise that kids are spending less and less time playing outside, and their health is paying the price. Over the last two decades, the occurrence of childhood obesity has more than doubled in kids 6-11 and has tripled in adolescents age 12-19. (Source: Centers for Disease Control, BMI Study, 2002)

We in the outdoor industry want to do something about it, but what to do? Manufacturers and retailers alike make generous corporate donations to deserving non-profit organizations, but that's typically where the involvement ends. The responsibility falls on the non-profit and government sectors to implement actionable outreach initiatives. Considering the power that consumer branding holds over children, it has become increasingly evident that it is time for corporations to take action on issues that pertain to their respective consumer audiences, getting involved with deserving causes and setting examples for other businesses.

Taking Action

Alarmed by increasing media coverage of the childhood inactivity crisis, Hi-Tec Senior VP of Sales & Marketing Scott Chantos, father of 2, felt drawn to take action. His ambition prompted Hi-Tec to take a corporate stand and deliver a meaningful message that reached beyond selling outdoor footwear. Together with the Marketing team, Hi-Tec decided the next collection of kids footwear would be driven by a cause-related marketing effort. Profitability would be a secondary concern, allowing Hi-Tec to focus in earnest on disseminating a message. The "Phibian" concept was born.

The Chicken, the Egg, or the Shoe?

Much in the way that Cap'n Crunch the character came before the development of an actual cereal, Hi-Tec began to sketch out the new corporate spokesfrog, "Phibian". With a tag line of "Get Up, Get Out!", Phibian, the older, wiser kid on the block, would promote the importance of a healthy, active lifestyle for kids and wholeheartedly advocate respect for the outdoors.

The Phibian character was conceptualized, rendered and fully animated. Partnerships were formed and agreements drafted. *Only then was the product design team brought in to commence development of the footwear line that would market the message.* The shoes would be fun and functional, conducive to outdoor recreation. The adorable patterns would resemble Phibian and his friends with colorful materials, hologram eyes, and a sticky-grip outsole that mimics the fingers and "pods" of a frog.

The Power of Partnerships— Hi-Tec Partners with Leave No Trace

Well aware of the outreach power of non-profit organizations, Hi-Tec selected Leave No Trace as the primary benefiting partner to the Phibian program. With a strong and reputable history and several children's programs, LNT speaks well to kids in its educational promotion of responsible outdoor recreation. Each of the Seven Leave No Trace Principles provides Phibian an opportunity to teach a valuable environmental lesson. A portion of the proceeds of each pair of Phibian shoes sold would be donated to Leave No Trace.

Through this partnership, Leave No Trace has gained a strong corporate ally and collaborator. **Simply put, the promotion of the Phibian Collection means the promotion of Leave No Trace.** The LNT logo appears prominently on trade show banners, point-of-sale fixtures, print advertisements, the Phibian website, and more. Text explaining the "portion of the proceeds" tie-in accompanies the logo wherever possible.

The benefits for Hi-Tec are plentiful as well.

- **Favorable brand image:** Hi-Tec receives a brand image boost, presenting the corporation as a responsible environmental ambassador.
- **Generous public relations:** Both trade and consumer publications have responded well to the program, generating a bevy of editorial coverage.
- **Increased sales:** The visible philanthropic tie-in at the retail level spurs sales. Though children influence footwear sales, parents typically make the ultimate decision. This partnership demonstrates to parents, who are outdoorsmen/women themselves, that their purchase will have a positive impact on a cause they know well.

Success All Around

Outreach: Over 33,000 Phibian/Leave No Trace coloring books have been distributed via the promotional efforts of Hi-Tec and Leave No Trace.

Awareness: An estimated 140,000 readers were reached with the initial trade coverage of the program launch. Consumer coverage has reached millions.

New accounts: Based in large part on the trade PR campaign, retailers who had not previously carried Hi-Tec children's product were suddenly contacting Hi-Tec seeking the Collection.

Product order: The initial order for Phibian product placed by Hi-Tec exceeded 20,000 pair, more than any other kids product launch in Hi-Tec history. Based on this initial buy, Hi-Tec was able to present Leave No Trace with their first proceed donation in June 2005.

Sell-through: Launched in Spring 2005, sell-through has been impressive. For example, REI started selling the Phibian Collection in 10 stores, and then due to the products' popularity increased their buy to 40 stores, effective immediately. Several other retailers have sold out of the shoes and have Phibian on their hot list for this season.

Grassroots Tactics are Good Business

Initial promotion of the Phibian Program has utilized grassroots vehicles. For example, a Phibian-branded coloring book was produced, outlining the Seven LNT Principles and depicting the Phibian character as a responsible outdoor enthusiast. One coloring book is inserted into each shoe box, and 33,000 others are being distributed to schools and other organizations that outreach to children.

Additionally, a dynamic, kid-friendly webpage www.phibianandfriends.com was developed to promote Phibian, his footwear and the messages he advocates. Fun animal facts, nature-oriented games and other interactive features accompany product and partnership information.

Through the Phibian program, Hi-Tec has reinforced the notion that cause-related marketing works. It creates mutually-beneficial relationships between corporate America and non-profit organizations. It has the ability to take a cause and broadcast it to millions more Americans than ever imagined. Extending from the executive to the buyer, sales representative, consumer and beyond, cause-related marketing hits the nerve inside of us all to make a difference in this world. It is with pride and ambition to make change that Hi-Tec challenges the rest of the industry to step up and take corporate commitments to the next level.

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Manufacturer Action Tips

Get involved with your partnerships. Be sure that every corporate donation accompanied by taking action. A logo on a page may align your brand with a cause, but it may or may not be noticed by the consumer.

Select a message that makes sense for your brand, and whose target is similar to your consumer. The product development will follow naturally.

Create a tearpad campaign for your retailers which encourages consumers to donate $1, write a kid's name on a "plaque" and hang it on the store wall or cash stand. Donate 100% of the proceeds to an organization who gets kids outdoors.

Retailer Action Tips

Hand out Leave No Trace Kids Principle cards with each kids purchase. Visit www.lnt.org for more information.

Create a mural out of butcher paper with a tree, stream, etc. Encourage kids to write, with parents help if needed, how they played outside recently. This prompts kids to reflect upon how much fun they had outside and encourages further playtime.

Plan and promote the hosting of a kids outdoor scavenger hunt at a nearby park. Have kids check off a list of treasures, like a funny-shaped rock, a piece of litter, etc.