

Nexgrill 2023 Product Reviews Campaign

Purpose

Merlot Marketing represents Nexgrill, a Southern California-based manufacturer of outdoor grills, smokers, griddles and cooking accessories. The Nexgrill team began 2023 with the request that Merlot Marketing secure the brand in television and product reviews opportunities.

The challenge: most television appearances have a participation fee, and many consumer websites require the companies and products they cover to also be registered with an affiliate program. Nexgrill does not have the budget to accommodate for television fees and affiliate programs, so they enlisted our agency to facilitate non fee-based editorial opportunities.

Merlot Marketing's public relations team set two goals to deliver to the client in the first 6 months of 2023:

- 1) Secure at least 3 Nexgrill product reviews in top-tier consumer outlets
- 2) Secure Nexgrill in at least 1 television show

Implementation

We created a custom pitching tactic to reach the editorial teams at Nexgrill's top consumer media targets, which included lifestyle, men's, outdoor and food-focused outlets. Our Public Relations Account Supervisor led the strategy, supported by the Account Manager.

Starting in January, the Merlot Marketing team began sending traditional news releases about Nexgrill's new products to key editors and product testers. We did not receive responses to our initial outreach.

In April, we then began sending follow up emails that included video news releases (short form videos with the new products' talking points and insights from Nexgrill's marketing executive). These were included as part of hyper-targeted pitches that aligned with the start of spring/summer grilling season, Memorial Day/July 4th entertaining, and Father's Day gifts. This tactic proved to be successful, resulting in several media responses that let to our team exceeding its goals of securing 3 product reviews and 1 television spot.

Budget

All time spent coordinating the product reviews and media coverage via email and phone, press release creation, pitching and PR support were included under the client's monthly retainer and not billed. Our monthly allocated time per the scope of contract is supposed to be up to 30 hours. Due to the increased interest that we received from media in April and May, Nexgrill approved for our hours to be increased to 50 hours in June to accommodate our time spent on coordinating the product samples, building those media relationships and additional pitching efforts that contributed to the success of the campaign.

Evaluation

1) Our first objective was to secure at least 3 product reviews in top-tier consumer outlets. Merlot exceeded this goal by coordinating the product testing and reviews in 6 media outlets, including:

- *Wall Street Journal*: [cast iron skillet review](#)
- *CNET*: [Daytona review](#)
- *Popular Science*: [Ora review](#)
- *The Spruce Eats*: [Oakford Vertical Pellet Smoker review](#)
- *Good Housekeeping*: [Daytona review](#) and [Neevo review](#)
- *Amazing Ribs*: [Neevo review](#)

2) Our second objective was to secure at least 1 feature on a television show. Merlot exceeded this goal by working with the team at Good Housekeeping (who we were connected with through coordinating previous product reviews) to arrange a Nexgrill product to be sent for a News 12 Network segment called "[The Real Deal](#)", which aired across 7 total news channels in the New York tri-state region.

In addition to exceeding these goals, Merlot Marketing also facilitated 507 total media mentions for Nexgrill between January and June 2023 (with 458 of these occurring between April and June), which was a 179% increase compared to the 182 total mentions from January to June 2022.