

To: MNA judges
From: Korrie Wenzel
Re: Advertising campaign entry
Date: Sept. 28, 2022

Judges of the MNA,

Please consider our “Home of Economy-Grand Forks Herald Pie Bake-off” campaign in your “Best Advertising Campaign” category.

I get it – a pie contest might not necessarily be as fancy as some of the ad campaigns you will judge, but consider the genesis of our event and the huge popularity that it saw.

Our goal was twofold: First, we wanted to reconnect with some businesses that have, in recent years, abandoned print advertising. Second, our goal was to create a talk-about event. I feel that we did both – anecdotal and statistical evidence show us the tournament was quite popular and our title sponsor already wants back in next year.

Technically, the event was an ad campaign to tout Home of Economy, a retail chain in North Dakota. But the tournament actually became a huge hit with our readers, too.

As part of the campaign, we profiled all 16 bakers with print and online feature stories. Each baker was assigned a sponsor, and each sponsor’s logo not only ran in the print and online ads that we created, but their logo also was published within the story about their baker.

We kept up excitement by running the tournament bracket continually throughout the event (complete with mugshots of the bakers) This is where we earned our money – the advertising brought to us through Home of Economy (as chief sponsor) and the other 17 sponsors that paid to be part of the event.

So as we earned revenue from the actual contest, we also saw huge readership numbers. Our statistics show that the 23 pie stories (16 profiles, plus seven about the tournament itself) saw approximately 29,000 page views and nearly 70,000 minutes of engagement. Another word for “engagement” is “attention,” or how many minutes our readers actually had those stories open. All told, it comes to more than *1,166 hours* of attention on the pie contest stories. That’s just what we saw with online readers, and does not include our print readers.

As for marketing, we published ads – with the business sponsor logos – about the contest 30 times in the Herald (both print and the e-edition). Most of these were the tournament bracket, which readers naturally wanted to see and keep track of. We also produced an ad for radio that included sponsor names, and one television ad that included the main sponsors.

From the bakers, we heard a lot of chatter about the event. We were sure to let the advertisers know these comments, to help assure them of the buzz created by the campaign.

Among the comments:

Peggy Raddatz, of Grafton, N.D.: "I was receiving comments from all kinds of people in various places I would go: the grocery store, park, pool, work, etc. I was receiving Facebook messages as well. It was so fun to hear."

Jill Hanson, of Newfolden, Minn.: "It was fun hearing ‘good luck Jill’ from local people I’d meet on the street in Newfolden and even while in Thief River Falls stores, who said they were reading the articles and following my contest results in the Grand Forks Herald. The city of Newfolden even put up congrats on the City Sign and on their Facebook page. I also received many good luck messages and emails from current and old friends that found out about the contest in the Herald. I know some folks purchased an online subscription just to read the pie contest articles!"

Caitlin Olson, of East Grand Forks: “I regularly heard about the contest from family and a lot of people at work, including close colleagues and faculty across campus! Many of them heard about it right away (in the announcement) and kept up with the results, with some checking for updates every Monday and sharing with others. I would say that the contest was successful as an extra incentive for people to read the Herald, and it also provided an opportunity for community building around the campaign.”

And these comments came in from some of the sponsors:

From Annie Bonzer, communications leader at the local hospital: “We had fun participating and seeing all of the buzz!”

From Linn Hodgson, at the ad agency that represents the title sponsor: “Thanks for coming to us with the first right of refusal. We all agree it was a fantastic partnership. Consider us ‘sold’ on the repeat in 2023.”

From Sally Grosgebauer, marketing director at Valley Senior Living: “Valley enjoyed being a part of this and we saw much interest from our own staff as well as family and friends that have a connection to our care community!”

Again, the goal of this was to not just earn revenue (and it was a respectable money-maker). The intent was to reconnect with lost advertisers and especially to *show the power of print advertising* and that the Grand Forks Herald still can create a buzz. Meanwhile, we saw tons of readership through this campaign.

Thanks for considering this campaign.

Note: Below are some links that show the stories that I wrote to highlight this advertising campaign. Please keep in mind that although they are actual news stories, they are indeed all part of the campaign.

Korrie Wenzel
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Examples of pie ad campaign stories written by Korrie Wenzel:

Profiles

- For sisters in Reynolds, N.D., raising funds for community is easy as pie. [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald pie contestant Amy Lents details ‘cooking adventures.’ [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald pie tournament’s Rose Fuchs: ‘I’ve always enjoyed baking’ [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald Pie Bake-off’s Evan Andrist’s pies: Locally sourced for local charities [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald contestant Victoria Bouvette brings penchant for experimentation [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald Pie Bake-off’s Kovar ... plenty of kitchen experience [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald contestant Handford says ‘I haven’t met a recipe I couldn’t conquer’ [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald pie contestant Tammy Schmitz broadcasts her love of cooking [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald pie contestant Dufault gained baking reputation in church fundraiser [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald pie contestant Caitlin Olson hopes to raise level of vegan recipes [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Grand Forks Herald Pie Bake-off’s Raddatz rekindles relationship with baking [Link](#)
- Home of Economy-Herald bake-off: McCauley learned skills from mom and grandfather [Link](#)
- Newfolden’s Hanson, among Home of Economy-Herald bakers, says ‘I really love to bake’ [Link](#)
- A city girl in the country: Kappel among bakers chosen for Home of Economy-Herald contest [Link](#)

Actual coverage of the campaign

- Contestants selected for Home of Economy-Grand Forks Herald Pie Bake-off [Link](#)
- Judges in Home of Economy-Herald Pie Bake-off looking forward to creativity [Link](#)
- Eight bakers advance to second round of Home of Economy-Herald Pie Bake-off [Link](#)
- Once again, crust is kind at Home of Economy-Herald Pie Bake-off [Link](#)
- Caitlin Olson’s Blue Bird Pie wins Home of Economy-Herald Pie Bake-off [Link](#)