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Building Community Through Women's Hoops

CLIENT:

Force 10 Hoops LLC.

Seattle, Washington

www.wnba.com/storm

TIMETABLE:

Gastineau Communications partnered with GREATWORK LLC to provide media relations help and short- and long-term communication strategy during the 2008 WNBA season.

RESULTS:

The Seattle Storm was able to maintain its fan base and strengthen its brand among its core fans. Attendance at Storm games actually increased throughout the season compared to attendance at men's basketball games which fell by two-thirds in the 2007-2008 season. The team reached an agreement with the City of Seattle on a new, long-term lease at the city-owned sports arena.



The Storm is Seattle's WNBA professional basketball team. In 2008, the team was purchased from by a group of local women whose intent is to keep women's professional basketball in Seattle.

Our team was hired in May of 2008 to develop a strategy to communicate the benefits of local ownership and build support for women's professional basketball as a community asset. A key challenge in the communication plan was to overcome the distraction of a very emotional, public lawsuit and trial between the men's professional basketball team and the City of Seattle which was happening while the Storm's season was in full swing.

Project goals:

- Build support of the Storm and enhance its image as a community asset.
- Maintain existing fan base and grow attendance at games.
- Strengthen brand as affordable family-friendly entertainment.
- Maintain continuity in communications and media relations during split from the parent organization.

Solution:

- Expanded media outreach beyond sports reporters to include daily columnists, entertainment, business and community-based publications.
- Created talking points and interview request systems for owner speeches and media interviews.
- Integrated key messages into community relations, marketing and sponsorship programs.
- Developed a tool kit of best practices for the new PR team to use moving forward.