

## Background

Trufresh, an international processor of farmed raised fish, produces 100% antibiotic and PCB free salmon and other seafood products, which are frozen using the patented Trufresh "Unique Fresh Freezing Method" process that completely eliminates the quality degradation associated with freezing fresh fish. Trufresh products are indistinguishable from freshly harvested salmon, lobster and other seafood in taste, texture and aroma, yet completely eliminate both contamination and inventory problems. Trufresh seafood is available all over the world.

## Challenges and Opportunity

With the approach of the International Boston Seafood Show, the nation's most important seafood trade show, Trufresh was faced with a major business challenge. The company's patents for its freezing process were set to expire, creating a sense of urgency to create as many new licensing agreements with seafood producers as it could before the patent expirations.

In order to meet this goal, Trufresh was interested in making a huge splash at the seafood show to prove that it had the best freezing method available in the industry today and to expand its product line as quickly as possible.

## Strategy and Tactics

A few weeks before the start of the Boston Seafood Show, we met with senior executives to plan our media relations strategy to help the company achieve the aforementioned goals. It was then Trufresh's president, Barnet Liberman, told us of an experiment using fresh live lobsters that were frozen by the Trufresh process. He told us that many of the lobsters reanimated after being thawed out. Yes, you read that correctly. He explained that by using its patented freezing technology, freezing lobsters in a brine at 40 degrees below zero and then thawing them in 28-degree seawater, Trufresh workers saw some of the lobsters actually come back to life. We immediately urged him to produce a video of the experiment, which proved to be the key ingredient in the enormous media coverage Trufresh subsequently received.

Trufresh executives readily acknowledged that their goal was not to provide customers with lobsters that would always come back to life. Rather, the purpose of the demon



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stration was twofold. First, show that the Trufresh process kept seafood so fresh that even lobsters in a comatose state, could well, come back to life. The other purpose was to open a new distribution channel to markets, such as lobster farmers, who were searching for a solution to maintain year-round production.

To help sell more licenses to seafood farms, the demonstration was a perfect way to launch this effort as well as call attention to the benefits of Trufresh's unique freezing techniques and products.

We needed to find a way to create a buzz at the show that would attract traffic to the Trufresh booth. With the video in hand, we decided to target a reporter that we knew could help us maximize exposure for us not only nationally but also all over the world. We identified the wildlife and fisheries reporter at the Boston bureau of the Associated Press and immediately contacted him.

We knew that the reporter would not be interested in simply covering a small company's freezing process. But who could resist a story that had lobsters coming back to life? The story broke the first day of the Boston Seafood Show. A barrage of media and seafood company executives surrounded the TruFresh booth requesting to see the video. As they all watched in awe, our client was overwhelmed (and thrilled) by all the attention.

No agency personnel went to the show, there were no press conferences, no press kits and no lobster salad lunches for anyone. The AP reporter did not even attend. There was only one terrific story.

## **Results**

The publicity generated exceeded our clients wildest expectations. The AP story alone ran in hundreds of newspapers around the country and generated coverage by reporters attending the trade show. USA Today ran the story, as did the Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, New York Post, Boston Globe, San Francisco Chronicle and other major dailies. CNN, Fox News, CBS Morning News, ABC and CBS affiliates throughout the country covered the story.

The international coverage Trufresh received was also dramatic. The AP story itself appeared in Canada, Pakistan, China, Chile and other Latin American media outlets. Internet blogs with interests in science, seafood farming and food, filled up with stories about the "Night of the Living Lobster." For days and weeks after the initial story, Trufresh did interviews with the BBC, several Japanese magazines and radio programs in South America. The story enabled us to approach all the major trade publications, including Seafood Processor, the bible of the industry, with product-specific content garnering many feature stories.

Perhaps generating press coverage about frozen lobsters coming alive wasn't in itself a very difficult task. The press will always be attracted to these kinds of stories. The central element of our strategy, however was not simply to garner press. After all, publicity for the sake of publicity is meaningless. Tactically, we succeeded by first reaching out to the AP reporter who would best be able to jumpstart interest in our

story and to maximize the coverage. Yet most importantly, what made this effort so enormously successful from a strategic viewpoint were the business results it subsequently achieved for our client.

As a direct result of our efforts and the powerful press coverage Trufresh received, the company signed several multi-million dollar deals with seafood producers in a number of its product lines. Trufresh executives also tell us that its revenues have since skyrocketed to record heights. Not a bad return on investment for bringing lobsters back from the dead and about \$10,000 worth of agency activity.