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## MPRM Gives Birth to a Hit Case Study

### Situation Analysis

Directed and adapted by award-winning filmmaker Thomas Balmès, *BABIES* simultaneously follows four babies around the world – from birth to first steps. Re-defining the nonfiction art form, *BABIES* joyfully captures on film the earliest stages of the journey of humanity that are at once unique and universal to us all. Focus Features opened *BABIES* on May 7, 2010 on more than 500 screens nationwide.

In addition to the general disadvantage that documentaries are rarely commercially successful, our main challenge was the lack of talent for interviews and premieres. Barring the unknown French director, no other talking heads were available as the subjects of the film were...babies.

Therefore, our main goal was to generate awareness and build high-profile buzz on the movie purely on the subject matter and with the help of artwork and electronic materials like clips from the film and trailers. Aside from traditional entertainment outlets, we also needed the support of the parenting community, grass roots organizations, Mommy & Me groups as well as schools and educational centers.

## **Strategy**

MPRM Communications worked closely with Focus Features to position *BABIES* as a must-see family event – an adorable, easily accessible film with a universally recognized subject. Releasing *BABIES* on Mother’s Day weekend proved to be a brilliant marketing move by the studio.

We focused heavily on a female demographic, including all ages - daughters, mothers and grandmothers.

MPRM began the campaign with initial press releases and screening invites in the form of birth announcements; “Focus Features is joyfully announcing the arrival of ‘Babies’ in theatres on May 7 – Mother’s Day weekend.”

For coverage, we targeted the traditional entertainment media outlets, but put an even larger emphasis on specialized publications such as parenting magazines (American Baby, Parents, etc) as well as health (Fit Pregnancy) and educational publications (Scholastic, Scientific American, Mind, etc).

We furthermore reached out to suburban newspapers to include blurbs and/or artwork for the film in their Mother’s Day special sections and issues.

Although we did not have recognizable talent from the film available, we managed to book filmmaker Thomas Balmes on several high profile talk and entertainment programs such as NPR, AP, CNN, Extra and Good Morning America. We furthermore utilized artwork and clips from the film as well as its trailer to generate visible coverage on local and national entertainment and news programs.

MPRM also researched and invited the following groups and organizations to press screenings to help spread the crucial word-of-mouth for this campaign:

- Mommy blogs and parenting websites
- Celebrity moms
- Columnists and authors of baby books and parenting-related stories
- Doctors
- Mommy & Me yoga and exercise classes
- Charities
- Midwife groups
- Libraries and museums
- Gay baby groups
- Ethnic baby groups
- Adoption agencies and surrogacy groups
- Embassies and cultural centers
- Lamaze classes
- Schools and educational organizations
- Senior organizations

MPRM also supported Focus Features’ social media and online campaign, reaching out to mommy blogs and parenting websites.

And finally, to target a younger demographic, we also set up a nationwide college press conference call with the filmmaker.

**Results**

As a result of MPRM Communication's efforts, we generated massive media coverage in outlets ranging from The New York Times, The Los Angeles Times and USA Today to Entertainment Weekly, Time Magazine, Associated Press and Reuters, and booked multiple segments on broadcast outlets such as National Public Radio, Good Morning America, CNN, Extra, E!, Access Hollywood as well as countless online publications and websites.

*BABIES* opened to over \$2.1 million and debuted at #5 at the box office – a staggering number for a non-nature documentary. The film went on to gross a domestic total of over \$7.2 million.