



CASE STUDY | BRIDGESTONE BLIZZAK ICE TIRE INTRODUCTION

The challenge was to demonstrate the need for ice tires in winter markets where all-season tires were popular. So why not drag race on ice? Doing so helped Bridgestone convince skeptical media and dealers about the need for ice tires... and bolstered sales of their newest product.

PROBLEM Although ice tire use in northern markets had been on the decline because of all-season tires successes, Bridgestone was seeing dramatic stopping/acceleration times/distances on ice and snow because of a new tire technology they had developed. In the second year of U.S. sales of the Bridgestone Blizzak, the company wanted to implement a public relations campaign to help consumers better understand the product and dealership sales associates better sell them. The PR effort would also buy time while product advertising was being readied for the marketplace.

ACTION Working with Bridgestone engineers and product managers, Frank's team at a previous agency supported implementation of a demonstration concept that featured drag racing of two cars on ice rinks – one with the Bridgestone ice tire and one with a competitor's all season brand of tire. Following a Nashville dry run testing the event concept, five northern markets were identified for media and dealer demonstrations. Ice rinks were secured, presentations developed, an ice racing driver arranged, media notified, b-roll and media materials developed and the events held. Both reporters and dealers in attendance rode in both cars on the ice to experience the product differences.

RESULT Almost 500 sales associates attended the sessions, commenting afterwards how easy it was going to be to sell the tires because product attributes were so obviously superior to those of an all-season tire. More than 12 million media impressions were tracked, many beyond the target markets. Importantly, orders of the tires from two main customers immediately increased more than 200%. Sears became a new customer thanks to media in the Denver market which drove consumer calls to the retailer. Overall sales of the tire that year increased 41% and market share for the product increased 20%. The publication *Tire Business* even credited the promotion with increasing sales of ice tires from throughout the industry by 130%.

