



### GO PANTHERS

Georgia State's branding efforts helped launch a football program

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CPA turned restaurateur Terry Harps chairs gorilla fund

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## 19th Annual MAX Awards

In an effort to identify and honor best practices in marketing, Atlanta Business Chronicle publisher Ed Baker and Georgia State University's J. Mack Robinson College of Business' Ken Bernhardt joined forces in 1992 to launch the Marketing Awards for Excellence (MAX Awards).

The MAX Awards program is unlike other awards programs for advertising and marketing that are focused on creative execution. Instead the MAX Awards looks at innovation and success of products and

strategies and only honors three winners each year. The first MAX Awards was held Feb. 23, 1993, with a prestigious group of senior marketing executives, members of the GSU Marketing RoundTable, serving as the judges.

Now entering its 19th year, the MAX Awards continues to recognize the top innovators and marketers in Georgia. Presented by the Robinson College of Business Department of Marketing and Atlanta Business Chronicle, the 2011 award

recipients were scheduled to be announced at a breakfast on Friday, Feb. 25, at the Georgia Aquarium.

All the MAX Awards applicants were judged and the winners and finalists selected by the Georgia State University Marketing RoundTable. Bernhardt said the winners were recognized for delivering in the areas of innovation, marketing and showing successful results.

The 19th annual MAX Awards supports an Outstanding Minority Marketing Student Scholarship Fund at Georgia State.

### PRODUCT STRENGTH

Meda re-creates, relaunches iron supplement product and finds new niche

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### SOAPY SOLUTION

Global Soap Project recycles hotel soaps, redistributes to world's neediest citizens

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### OGRES & ONIONS

Growers find that if an ogre like Shrek eats Vidalia onions, so will kids

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# Global soap project a clean sweep for hotels

By **Giannina Smith**

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In many hotels around the world, used bars of soap are treated as waste. That is, they were until the Global Soap Project (GSP) came around. Granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in May 2010, the Global Soap Project reclaims and recycles soap from American hotels and distributes it to refugee camps in Africa and other vulnerable populations. With an estimated 2.6 million soap bars discarded every day by the 4.6 million hotel rooms in the United States, GSP is reducing landfill waste and contributing to saving lives by improving health and sanitary conditions around the world. Founded by Derreck Kayongo, who experienced life without soap while living in a refugee camp in Kenya, the startup nonprofit spread the word about its mission despite a shoestring budget, through public relations, its website and social media platforms, as well as the compelling story and charismatic personality of its founder.

"When I came into the U.S., I checked into the hotel and I was shocked that they



**2011 MAX AWARDS**



**WINNER**

GLOBAL SOAP PROJECT

**GLOBAL SOAP PROJECT  
Recycled Used Soap Bars  
Redistributed to Needy**

had three types of soap ... I asked the concierge what do you do with the used soap and he said, 'We throw those away,' " Kayongo said. "For someone who had been a refugee and coming here and being part of a country that had so much it made me so sad. Here we had a product that was still functional and useful and because of etiquette they were throwing it away into the environment."

Trying to put a dent in the 800 million bars of soap thrown away in the U.S. every

year, GSP collects soap from hotels and reprocesses them to ensure they are sanitary for reuse. The soap is softened by heat and filtered through a fine mesh screen to remove particles before it is reformatted into finished bars, hand-cut, cured, inspected and packaged to be sent to those in need through partnerships with nongovernment organizations (NGOs) like **Medshare International, CARE USA, Heart for Africa** and more. To ensure all soaps meet sanitary standards, GSP commissions third-party laboratory tests to screen for pathogens on a sample from each batch of soap it produces.

"We box the soap and give it to those organizations that are dealing with low-level populations. We are talking about refugees, orphans, victims of crisis like the earthquake in Haiti," Kayongo said.

As of the end of 2010, GSP collected more than 50 tons of soap that would have ended up in landfills and produced more than 35,000 new bars of soap.

"By partnering with those NGOs, we guarantee we are not interfering with the local market making soap and it's brought

to people who directly need that soap," Kayongo said.

Telling GSP's story through many speaking engagements, Kayongo also utilized university students to get the word out, offering colleges and universities the opportunity to create student chapters to support GSP. The first student chapter was launched at Georgia State University in August 2010.

"It's amazing how a cause that has to do with helping others is something students love to do," he said.

As a result of its grass-roots marketing, GSP received coverage by the Associated Press as well as FOX Network News and local network affiliates around the country. This resulted in more than 300 hotels signing up to collect soap, as well as volunteers and donations.

"We were very deliberate in how we put the story out to the different media entities; we didn't go through local media, we went for the AP," Kayongo said. "We teased them with the story and when they took that story we knew that would hit the whole market."

# Making onions attractive one ogre at a time

By **Giannina Smith**

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In an effort to make its brand of sweet onions appealing to a new, younger audience, Vidalia used the release of the final installment of the popular Shrek franchise — the No. 1 animated movie of all time — as a jumping-off point. Slated for release in mid-May 2010, the Shrek debut coincided with Vidalia's seasonal harvest and provided an ideal vehicle to sway its traditionally older-skewed marketing to a younger audience.

"We've got these incredible people who won't buy anything but Vidalia onions, but those people are aging, and so that my farmers have a livelihood in years to come, I feel that it's my job to try to appeal to younger audiences or newer audiences so we can sustain their industry," said Wendy Brannen, **Vidalia Onion Committee (VOC)** executive director.

Working to find an outlet in which to target future shoppers, Brannen joined efforts with Steve Langston of **Langston Communications** to find an animated cartoon character that both appealed to kids and could make sense for an onion. After discovering the timing of Shrek's release and recalling the line from the first Shrek movie, "Ogres are like onions," Langston and Brannen decided Shrek was a perfect fit. The duo sold the concept to the VOC board utilizing the "Shrek Forever After, Vidalias Forever Sweet" tagline and brokered a deal with **DreamWorks Animation SKG Inc.** to kick off the "Ogres and Onions" partnership.

As part of the joint venture, the VOC featured Shrek in its 2010 national consumer marketing, as well as its in-store packaging and point-of-sale materials. Vidalia issued consumer and retail trade press releases and hired a chef to develop eight "Shrek-tacular" kid-friendly recipes that were presented in marketing materials and on packaging with professional photography.

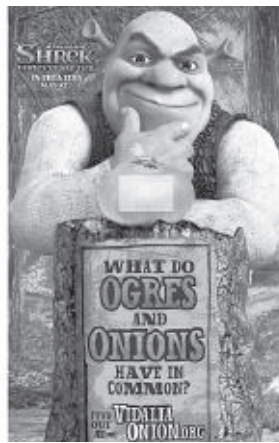
Brannen and four others worked with a small budget to create a buzz online among parents, psychologists and food marketing organizations. The team focused on comparing Shrek to a Vidalia onion with the idea that they both have coarse outer layers, but as you peel back the layers there is a sweet center.



**2011 MAX AWARDS**



**WINNER**



**VIDALIA ONION COMMITTEE/LANGSTON Communications "Ogres and Onions" Program**

Other campaign highlights included the creation of an online game called "Shrek's Hunt 'n Peel," which was similar to an Easter egg hunt with an ogre theme. The online game yielded nearly 45,000 entries — almost five times the results the company received in prior contests.

The Vidalia marketing team also brought the Georgia state vegetable into schools through educational posters and kid-friendly trivia. A kids' brochure was also created and Vidalia advertised on the back of milk cartons.

Overall, the objective was to use the likability of Shrek with adults, to get them to purchase more Vidalia onions, and link the appeal of Shrek to solidify the Vidalia brand with young children who are also future shoppers, Brannen said.

As a result of the unique partnership between ogre and onion, sales increased 50 percent by the end of June 2010 compared with June 2009, according to VOC and data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agriculture Statistic Service. This increase was particularly notable considering that the 2010 onion season started two weeks late due to bad weather and the overall volume was down 22 percent.

The Ogres and Onions marketing story was featured on the front page of The Wall Street Journal and Brannen appeared on ABC World News with Diane Sawyer;

while Langston was featured live on Fox Business. The marketing campaign also got play on several blogs and Web pages from Parenting.com to the Los Angeles Times food page.

"So many print outlets that you wouldn't really think about covering a Vidalia onion did. Suddenly we've got Film Journal International talking about us and

'Entertainment Weekly' had a blurb about our promotion so we really hit a cross-section of all this media that we normally wouldn't be able to get into," Brannen said.

The Ogres and Onions marketing program also appeared on the front of the top two produce papers six times and received Produce Business Magazine's Produce Marketing Excellence Award.

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