

Building Pride® Employee Campaign



Gerdaу's beginnings date back to 1901, when it started as a nail factory in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Today, the company has hundreds of locations in 14 countries around the world with products present in the daily lives of millions of people. Annually, 15 million tons of scrap are recycled and turned into quality steel, which serves the construction, industrial, agricultural and automotive sectors. Gerdaу is the leader in long steel production in the Americas and the largest special steel producer in the world.



The Situation

To say the steel manufacturing industry has undergone major transformation in the last decade is an understatement. Increased local and global competition and government and industry regulations and a slowing economy are only some of the challenges faced by Gerdaу as well as the entire industry. Gerdaу Long Steel North America leadership recognized that this new economy was here to stay; it couldn't be waited out. They knew they needed to modernize fast, work smarter and more simply, be open and honest and leverage and unite its strongest asset – Gerdaу employees.

Gerdaу's North American Communications and Public Affairs Department, a five-person department in Tampa, Florida, knew that during a time of massive change, it would be critical to engage employees in all roles and at all levels across the U.S. and Canada. Gerdaу had new business initiatives ready to roll out; now they needed a rallying cry to bring everyone together.

The Solution

Spark's Building Pride Employee Campaign was the perfect solution. This multiple touch point campaign:

- United employees under the banner of "Steel Proud" – the campaign built on the rich culture and history of Gerdaу and the amazing impact its employees and Gerdaу steel have on the world today.
- Shared progress being made to achieve strategic imperatives, such as entering or growing into new markets and developing new products and applications for Gerdaу Steel.
- Recognized successes by highlighting new business contracts or completed works – these included quick wins and long-term successes.
- Informed and educated employees about the essential and positive role of Gerdaу steel and steel in general.
- Provided management with a creative way to share key messages that engaged people and excited them about the future of Gerdaу and the industry.
- Provided content to Gerdaу global communications partners so that it could be tailored and distributed company-wide.

The Execution

Spark performed research and discovery with the North American Communications and Public Affairs team, with key stakeholders in the company and at site visits with hourly employees at locations. We used insights gained to create Steel Proud program branding that would appeal to the mostly male audience, from recent graduates to near retirement. We created program branding that would be attention grabbing and powerful whether it was being featured on signage at locations, on the intranet or in print. In addition to engaging employees with how the business was evolving, the campaign also had to reflect the company's value of Safety First and support Gerdau's corporate branding guidelines. The final creative was exciting and fresh while also allowing flexibility for the campaign to evolve; a good thing as the campaign is now in its fourth year.

In parallel with developing the program branding, Spark developed a long-term communications plan, which included messaging by audience, touch points, channels and materials. Deliverables included At A Glance boards, electronic boards, wall decals, a new branded interactive area on the intranet, online stories featuring employees, online banners and engagement activities for location employees and families.

Not only does the content educate people about Gerdau's progress toward its business goals and how Gerdau steel is used, it also talks about the impact on the community and the environment. We refresh the campaign each year, updating the look and the content focus to continue engaging employees while retaining the key Steel Proud elements.

The Results

Results from online surveys and focus groups with employees across the U.S. and Canada at various levels with a variety of roles show that Steel Proud is an employee favorite. In focus groups about how to improve communications in general, when employees were asked what communications stood out to them, Steel Proud was in the top five of all communications for the company. In addition, the program has been expanded for the purpose of recruiting, marketing and government relations to share Steel Proud with external audiences.

