



## **Connecting with the Chinese media**

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TAHSN Education Day: April 30, 2010



# St. John's Rehab Hospital



- Ontario's only hospital solely dedicated to specialized rehabilitation
- 160 beds in north Toronto serving patients throughout GTA and Ontario
- Founded: 1937 by Sisterhood of St. John the Divine
- 2,400+ inpatients, 40,000+ outpatient visits per year
- Individually customized rehab to meet physical, emotional, psychological, work, social and spiritual needs
- Community affiliation with University of Toronto
- Leading-edge research
- Specialty clinics for motor vehicle injuries, workplace injuries

# St. John's Rehab Hospital



- Provide specialized care for adults recovering from:
  - amputations
  - burn injuries (unique in Ontario)
  - organ cancers (unique in Ontario)
  - cardiovascular surgery
  - organ transplants (unique in Canada)
  - orthopaedic conditions
  - strokes and neurological conditions
  - traumatic injuries
  - complex medical conditions/procedures requiring short-term, active reconditioning





# Key challenges (2005)



- Provide health-promotion service to patients, community
  - Arthritis education: top priority
- Raise our community profile
  - Bring people on-site
- Provide culturally relevant patient services
  - Cantonese: a top-five first-language
- Expand pool of donors
  - Serve their communities
- Market our wellness services
  - Acupuncture, aquatic arthritis program
- No budget for new initiatives





# The solution



- *Staying Healthy With Arthritis:*  
September 24, 2005
- Free, two hour education seminar
- Open to the community
- Entirely in Cantonese
- Featuring:
  - St. John's Rehab multidisciplinary team
  - The Arthritis Society

# 130 guests attended!



- How did we make this happen?
  - Partnership with Foundation
  - Worked with clinical experts
  - Mined staff and volunteer expertise
- Decisions:
  - Entirely in Cantonese
  - Two primary communications strategies:
    - Spread the word (Before Facebook and Twitter!)
    - Ethnic Media





# Media plan



- Identified five outlets:
  - Fairchild and OMNI TV
  - Ming Pao and Sing Tao newspapers
  - North York Mirror (English, local media)
- Organizing committee/expert involvement:
  - Development of messages
  - Media training
  - Full participation



# Communications results



- Interest in event
  - pre- and post-event coverage in all four outlets drove attendance, awareness



- New relationships
  - Approached as subject matter experts
  - Three-part Fairchild TV series

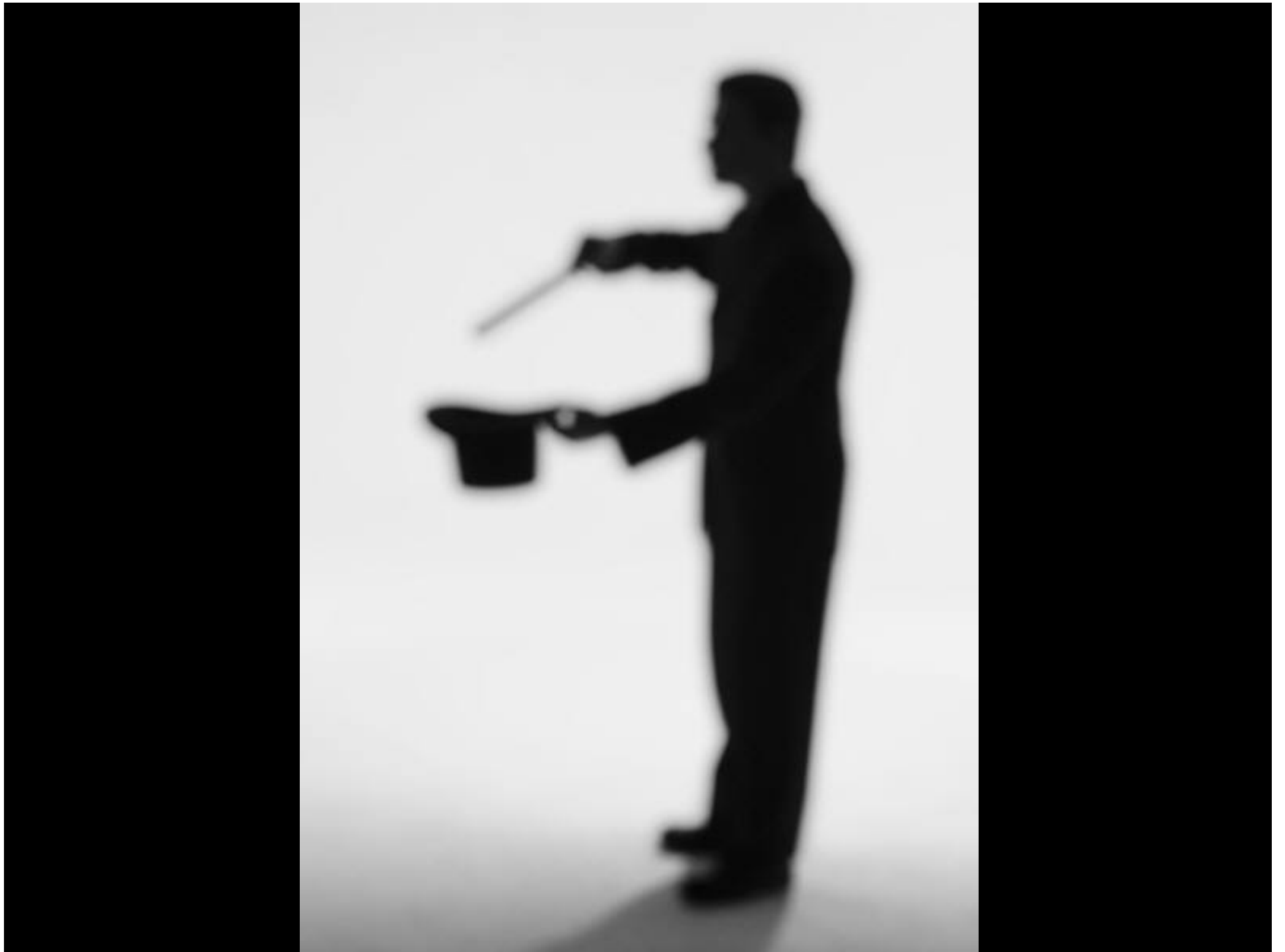


- Interest in our activities
  - Seen as a strong provider to Chinese community
  - Coverage of redevelopment, oncology program launch

# Organizational results



- 130 attendees (target = 50)
- Recognized by Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation for health promotion activities
- Recruited new Board member, two new senior volunteers
- Built new relationships with major donors



# Lessons learned: It's not magic!



- Identify the need
- Provide real value to the audience – tailor message and service
- Select right media
- Build and maintain relationships
- Prepare and engage subject matter experts
  - Cantonese-speaking therapists
- Package expertise in an interesting, unique and engaging way
- Use high-profile individuals who appeal to audience
  - Active Chinese supporters of Foundation



# Avoiding pitfalls



- Human resources challenges
  - Engage expert stakeholders
  - Ethnic media is part of the media relations mix
- Where's the value?
  - The media want to work with hospitals
  - Match media to communications objective
  - People, and your patients, use these media
- Translation and cultural awareness
  - Existing resources in your facility can help with interviews and evaluation
  - It's about our audience and clients, not our team
  - Misinterpretation happens in English too!

