

Case Study Analysis 2

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“Step Up- Strap In” Step Book

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Case Summary:

The 2008 Loyola University New Orleans PRSSA Bateman Team presented a step book to help involve and engage adolescent “tweens” with seatbelt safety. The “Step-Up Strap-In” campaign merged with local hip-hop groups and personalities, the sorority Delta Sigma Theta, the organization Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW), and their main corporate sponsor, Chevrolet.

The campaign toured at four different local tween locations and three public and private schools to address the importance of seat-belt usage. The local media was involved, and helped to encourage dialogue about the campaign and its premise.

Analysis of Selected Target Public:

The Loyola University New Orleans PRSSA Bateman Team chose the correct target public by selecting the tweens. These adolescents comprise the public that the campaign is trying to address directly. Through the secondary as well as primary research conducted, the practitioners discovered that unfortunately parents were not very

instrumental in encouraging dialogue about seatbelt safety. Although the second objective, “to increase the number of parents and primary guardians who say they strictly enforce seat belt safety issues by five percent in the New Orleans metro area within a three-week period during February”, was a good idea, it proved to be unsuccessful. The team received mixed results from the attempts to inform the parents of the relevant seat belt safety issues and provide them with the knowledge to enforce the correct vehicle passenger safety rules.

The teachers at the beginning of the study predicted this mediocre response by the parents of the tweens. However, the results could have been unremarkable because a significant percentage, 79%, of tween parents answered the initial survey question by saying that they participated regularly in sending positive seat-belt safety messages to their children.

This evidence also supports the conclusion that the practitioners targeted the correct primary audience. Although the parents are important and do hold influence on their children, especially at the tween age, the degree of change in the parents’ behaviors and attitudes proves that the most effective primary public is the tweens themselves.

Analysis of the Campaign’s Success:

The main objectives of the team were to increase the percentage of tweens in the New Orleans metro area who always buckle their seat belts by 10 percent within a three-week period during February; to increase the number of parents and primary

guardians who say they strictly enforce seat belt safety issues by five percent in the New Orleans metro area within a three-week period during February; to increase the likelihood of vehicle passenger safety discussion in schools by 10 percent during a three-week period during February 2008; and to increase the media coverage of Safe Kids and the issue of seat belt safety in New Orleans.

All of the objectives proposed by the group were successful except for the second objective, which was targeting the parents of the “tweens”. Utilizing alternative new media outlets such as Facebook, MySpace, and mass text messaging were very insightful ways of involving the “tween” age group with activities they would be interested in as well as being successful channels.

This campaign was successful, especially targeting the teachers. Research showed the practitioners that although tweens are characterized by an independent streak yet still turn to parents and teachers for advice and paradigms for how to act. The influence that a teacher can have on a tween as a positive role model is significant. Utilizing this relationship between teacher and student is a highly effectual channel for affecting the behaviors of tweens.

The partnership with the already existing Safe Kids Buckle Up program in the New Orleans metro area is a great way to help both programs. Studies show that seat belt usage has fallen 5.9 percent since Hurricane Katrina. A partnership between the two programs helps to positively improve both Safe Kids Buckle Up and the Step-Up program. Louisiana’s high fatality rate of 2.14 people per 100 million miles traveled makes it a very dangerous place to drive and a rash disregard for seat belt wearing only compounds the problem.

How to Adapt this Case to a National Audience:

This case program could be easily adapted to a national audience. The team would need to broaden the scope of the type of music played at the program. They could have different sub-groups that they could implement at each school, city, or location depending on what the demographic surveys stated that the majority of the people listened to. They could also have a set with multiple tracks of music with a blend of styles, such as the first song in hip-hop, then country, then R&B, then rock, followed by an instrumental version of the program, for example. The team could garner sponsors from all genres of music and then be able to selectively choose which tracks to implement on a case-by-case situation depending on what the audience would like. The tracks could also be set to a mix CD and sold either online through I-Tunes at a discount for the students who buy it, to encourage sales, and through stores in CD format.

How to increase the number of parents enforcing seat belt usage:

The statistic that car crashes are the number one cause of death of African Americans from birth to age 14 explains the team's selection of the New Orleans Parish School public school system as the primary choice to target. The parents exemplify an important public since for young people who are still highly impressionable; the parents

have an important and very influential role in the development of good habits. If the children observe their parents wearing seatbelts and demonstrating good safety measures while in automobiles, they are more likely to emulate that same behavior. If parents act as though seat belt usage is not important, then a child will reciprocate that same behavior that they see their parents doing. Although role models such as teachers and other adult authority figures do have significant influence on “tweens”, there is no replacement for the role of the parents.

The team was not particularly successful in their attempt to educate the parents about seat belt usage. Perhaps making a mandatory school meeting for all parents with tween children, as well as younger children who will eventually become tweens, at which the teachers could show videos from parents who have lost a child due to lack of seat belt usage. Through the use of personal testimonials, the parents could be persuaded more effectively of the importance of buckling one’s seat belt. It also is important to reach the parents before their children become tweens. If the parents (as well as the children) acquire the habit of wearing a seat belt at all times when they are young, then it will be a habit that has already developed by the time they reach age 12.