

Pepsi Pumps The Vibe On The Streets

Objective: Increase relevance and awareness of Mountain Dew and Code Red to urban customers.

Media Strategy: Radio-based.

Radio Plan: Partner with the leading urban stations in selected markets and use the credibility of their on-air talent to add credibility to their message.

Results: All-time highs in awareness and conversion of both brands among African-Americans and Latinos.

Extreme-style sports have been fitting when Pepsi has sold Mountain Dew to general market audiences. But when it came time to approach urban consumers, they knew they had to find a whole new "exhilaration platform," says Charlee Taylor-Hines, director, urban & ethnic marketing for Pepsi. And they found it on Radio.

"Radio is an extremely important part of our media mix, much more so for urban customers than even for our general market plans, where Radio is also a critical element," she says.

Their media decision was based on two factors; the knowledge that African-Americans spend more time with Radio (an astounding 4 hours a day versus 2.8 hours) and the fact that urban audiences have an intensely personal relationship with the medium.

It was also based in Radio's ability to let them leverage the explosive energy of the city streets and the spirit of individuality captured by artists revered by urban youth.

"We use celebrities," Taylor-Hines says, "like Busta Rhymes, who personify the personality of Mountain Dew and are also significant brand icons in and of themselves for urban consumers. Among African-American and Latino youth, celebrity power is very compelling." These combined elements have allowed Mountain Dew and Code Red to become an urban marketing force.

Choosing the right stations and DJs is as important as signing the right celebrity. "Being on the stations with the most street credibility says you know what's happening," Taylor-Hines explains.

Celebrity artists collaborate with Pepsi to produce the commercials. "They're creating the music, the lyrics, the feel, the vibe. So it actually feels and sounds like something that would naturally be played on the Radio."

In addition, of course, promotions and remotes were arranged - all of which put Mountain Dew and Code Red right on the street with consumers.

What's the result?

Mountain Dew has achieved unprecedented levels of awareness and share increases in urban markets. As for Code Red, "It's been one of the most successful new product launches in the history of the company. A lot of that is because of Radio, since we didn't use television," Taylor-Hines says. Awareness, trial and conversion from other brands to Code Red is extremely high among African Americans in the markets where the Radio campaign ran.



In addition to studies and sales, Taylor-Hines has another way of knowing that Radio is working for her. "The Pepsi consumers who have heard the Mountain Dew spot can repeat every word. That lets me know we are connecting with them." ●



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