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Viral Hall of Fame 2008



VIBE Media Group

<http://www.vibe.com/vibeverses/>

MarketingSherpa Summary:

This VIBE contest drove young and hip viewers to an urban music and culture website. Participants in an online rap music contest created and submitted videos to be voted on by the VIBE community. They received MySpace widgets to share their videos with friends and drive voters to <http://www.vibe.com> where they could interact, view and vote on more entries. VIBE saw an 800% ROI on their efforts and captured 60,000 new registered members.

Agency: UNBOUND Technologies

Client/company: Vibe Media Group

Brand campaign was conducted for: Vibe Media Group

Launch date of campaign: May 1, 2007

Target audience/demographic: 18- to 30-year-olds who are interested in urban music and culture

Campaign Goal:

Expand brand awareness, grow site traffic and drive incremental ad revenues for VIBE.com, owned by the VIBE Media Group, a music/lifestyle media company and a preeminent brand in urban and music culture. Vibe's other media properties include VIBE magazine, the VIBE Video-on-Demand channel and VIBE TV.

Creative:

Working with UNBOUND Technologies, VIBE created VIBE Verses - a rap music contest sponsored by the new AT&T. Independent hip hop artists were invited to record their lyrics and post a video on the VIBE Verses.com website. They were also given a widget enabling them to share their videos with fans, friends and their friends' friends. Friends then went to VIBE.com, where they joined the VIBE community, viewed the contest entries, voted for their favorite artists, and communicated with other community members.

Seed Strategy:

VIBE's seed strategy was to leverage UNBOUND's social search and social analysis products to identify individuals in its 70 million-person social graph with an affinity for hip hop and rap, as well as artists who were the most socially connected to them and, therefore, potentially the most influential. This strategy, coupled with widget technology that enabled viral dissemination of artists' videos on MySpace, was the key that ignited this contest.

Buzz Generated:

The contest generated significant buzz within the young, urban community. For more information about the campaign and to hear from John De Marchi, GM, VIBE Digital Media, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n56N-H9oSsg>.

Specific (Goal-Related) Campaign Results:

The VIBE Verses campaign went viral in 36 days. Some key metrics:

- 800% ROI for VIBE Media Group
- 60,000 new members registered with the VIBE community
- More than a 100-fold increase in video streams per month (from 10,000 to 1.2 million)
- 375,000 unique visitors to VIBE.com
- 775,000 media views (widget views, display ads, images, etc.)
- 5 million monetized ad impressions from premier brands, including Microsoft and Miller

Biggest Learning:

The biggest surprise in implementing a contest, such as this one is the amount of "gaming" or cheating that goes on to try to elevate one's favorite artist to the top of the list and/or push other artists down the list. Based on this, we are implementing new technology within our widget platform to minimize this activity.

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