From: Natalie Gregory
To: Gregory, Natalie
Subject: Fwd: Engage:Teens: Marketing To The New Breed
Date: Friday, February 03, 2012 10:59:50 AM

Begin forwarded message:

From: MediaPost Publications <news@mediapost.com>
Date: February 3, 2012 10:54:16 AM MST
To: gregorynr@gmail.com
Subject: Engage:Teens: Marketing To The New Breed

By Dave Martin Friday, Feb. 3, 2012

Marketing To The New Breed

Most marketers agree that we are in a period of radical change in the way we connect to each other and in the way we consume content. But no demographic group is more rapidly adopting innovation than teenagers. And not only are they the pioneers in the development of new channels, they also seem to speak in a language that's completely foreign to most of us who were born before 1990.

Members of this generation send hundreds of text messages per day, many of them to friends in the same room. They prefer short form digital channels of communication over all others including in-person, over the phone and even email.

We're also living in an era where access to all types of content is ubiquitous, and it is nearly impossible to control what teenagers see and hear. For today's teens, the barrier between their peers and their parents is no longer just a social one. There is a massive gap between what we see, discuss and share and the ways in which we do it.

So how do we effectively talk to them? For those of us trying to talk to teens, there are a new set of rules. And along with those rules come a few opportunities to establish long term relationships.

Stop Talking Down To Them

Teens are smarter than we are. Just ask them. They can see right through adult-speak and have an even easier time seeing through marketing speak. If there's ever a time to be authentic, it's when you're talking to teenagers. Another reason to make sure you're speaking to them on their level, is out of respect to their social power. These are the consumers that can take a ridiculous tag line and turn it into a meme that lasts for weeks. You don't want to give teens a reason to make fun of your brand. Kids can and will be cruel.

Remember That Cool Has Cache

More than any other age group, teenagers struggle to fit in. Offering a teenager something that they can use as social currency is the fastest way to convert them into an evangelist. A badge of honor, a celebrity autograph, early access to an interview or a music video can give a teenager the incredibly valuable ability to show themselves off to their peers. Never underestimate how important a little burst of self-esteem can be to a struggling teen.

Their Friends Are All That Matter to Them

During your teen years, you form bonds with your friends that are deeper, more meaningful and more critical than any relationship you've ever had. Your friends become your platform for confidence as well as your support system and your main source of information. When you can get teens to say good things about your brand to their friends, you've tapped into some of the most powerful peer to peer marketing that money can't buy. Make it easy and worthwhile for your teen audience to share the things that make your brand unique and great.

Stay Off Their Parents' Side

Today's teens may not rebel against authority the same way teens from prior generations have, but like it or not, every teen needs to know that their secrets are safe from their parents. It is a difficult balance to strike, but the more you can become a trusted confident and not a double agent, the more teens will be willing to listen to your story. This doesn't mean crossing the boundaries that parents

have set (or enabling teens to cross them), but it does mean building a brand personality that understands and protects the things that teens struggle through every day. Teens will only let a brand into their lives if they feel safe doing so.

Learn Their Language, But Speak to Them Like Adults

Half-hearted attempts to speak in emoticons and abbreviations are more likely to turn off a discerning teen than they are to help build their affinity for your brand. Unless you are a teen, don't try to sound like one. Instead, make sure you treat them with respect and focus on the content and tone instead of the syntax. Not only are they smarter than we are, but they are also smarter than you think. What brands say (and mean) to teens will go a lot farther than how brands say it.

Technology Is The New Justin Bieber

For the first time in human history, it truly is hip to be square. According to recent research conducted by MTV, more of today's teens want to be nerds than want to be jocks. This is a critical shift because it means that being an early adopter of technology has become more important than what you wear or whether or not you play football. Teens are excited by innovation and the way we message to them should reflect that.

Listen To Them – They Are Taking About You

Take the time to dive deeply into the places where teens are talking online, and listen to what they want. Since teens are more willing than other age groups to communicate with each other in public places, take advantage of this behavior and pay attention to them. You just might find an insight that prescribes a winning strategy for your brand.

Marketing to teens is always a work in progress, but if you bear in mind some of the ideas above, you'll have a much better chance of connecting with this very connected audience.

Post your response to the public Engage:Teen blog.

See what others are saying on the Engage:Teen blog.

As SVP of Media at Ignited, David Martin,/a> leads a large team of digital media professionals, and oversees digital media planning/buying for Universal Pictures, Universal Studios Home Entertainment, NBC, Bravo, Oxygen, Syfy, USA, MSNBC and Princess Cruises

You are receiving this newsletter at gregorynr@gmail.com as part of your free membership with MediaPost. If this issue was forwarded to you and you would like to begin receiving a copy of your own, please visit our site - www.mediapost.com - and click on [subscribe] in the e-newsletter box.
For advertising opportunities see our online media kit.

If you'd rather not receive this newsletter in the future click here.

We welcome and appreciate forwarding of our newsletters in their entirety or in part with proper attribution.
(c) Friday, Feb. 3, 2012 MediaPost Communications
15 East 32nd St., 7th floor, New York, NY 10016