

## **FEELUNREAL.COM – UNIQUE COLLECTIVE AWARENESS**

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What I thought I would talk about today is a little bit skewed off the topic. It is what I believe to be one of the contributors to what we are all here for and that is potentially helping out people who are affected by drug or alcohol or different types of harmful effects of partying.

So what we believe to be the reason behind this is the inability for a lot of these messages to get through to whom we are actually trying to talk to. So what I am going to address is an issue that is not actually new to you guys, it is actually an issue that is faced day to day by advertisers and different communicators, who are wishing to get any kind of message across to roughly the 15 – 30 year old age bracket, who no longer use the same sort of traditional media mechanisms to consume information. They are more attributed to what Paul has just mentioned – the internet and close peer relationships.

So I guess the objective is to reveal the contributor to this problem, which is the fact that these people are just not aware that there are harmful effects to what they are doing each week. Once we do get the message through to them, hopefully they could then help themselves, because another thing we have concluded is that, as much as there are all these other institutions there ready to help them and give them information, their bottom line is that they really just have to help themselves and that is really what we are looking at establishing. On top of all that, we are looking at establishing partnerships with people who have got the same cause - trying to get information out of these young people, and we believe that we have got a way that potentially can cut through the clutter and capture their attention.

We are really looking at developing awareness, that is the main key. We are not looking at changing people's lifestyles and we are not looking at changing their opinions; we are just hoping to actually enable them to form their own opinion by providing them with the information that enables them to do that. And we do that through trusted partnerships that promote and affect a positive social change.

Obviously you are all aware of the social health problems that exist in the youth market: sexual health, drugs and alcohol, all these contributing to mental health, and also community health awareness and that goes on a whole lot of different levels from homelessness to community support and involvement. All of these things or one of the things that contributes to that, which Paul also mentioned, is their lack of confidence in their traditional institutions being governments and big corporations and the police who are actually disseminating or providing a lot of this information. It is quite daunting to think that all this effort and money is going into this and it is really having little effect because, at the end of the day, they do not believe it.

So we are also going to touch on the fact that a lot of these people are used to communicating with one another in a very private way. One of them is mentioned with the internet. The use of e-mail and things like SMS have just boomed in the youth market and most young people are used to communicating on a one on one

level and this is also where they source a lot of their information from entertainment to stars and different recreational activities; all of this generally comes from their peer groups because now it is a lot easier for them to get that information and you find a lack of commitment with a lot of these youths, because there are so many options.

(Referring to screen) As you can see there is a huge barrier that the youth have built up which is based on their lack of trust and also the credibility of these institutions being constantly flawed in that - one thing might be said on the television that entirely contradicts itself on the internet when someone has done an independent study on it. So it is a very big barrier that has to be overcome or at the same time it has to be infiltrated from within, which is again coming back to their peers.

As I mentioned, the lack of confidence is coming from a general lack of confidence in main media. There is a lot of corporate trickery and a lot of publicity spinning and things like that, which these kids have been born into and are very aware of. I guess older generations have come to accept what comes into their environment when it comes to the TV and the radio, but I guess younger people are a little bit more sceptical, they are more aware of the tricks and the corporate ways in which they might try to grasp their attention or potentially trick them into buying something or get involved in something. And because there are so many different options and there are so many different things that they can do, so that they literally do not commit to anything.

So we are going to talk about potential alternative mediums in which you can communicate with the youth market. The paramount one is the internet and that is something that is very daunting for a lot of communicators because it is really like diving into a big sea, and where do you actually start. Young people might be clicking onto a site in the USA, or they might be clicking onto a site in the UK or wherever it might be, so it is very hard to plan media and use the internet to its full capacity. One way around that is to utilise the direct market and that is available on the internet - which is e-mail. And that is something that you notice within the youth market is that they will actually hold on to their e-mail address longer than they will hold on to their phone number or their residential address. And it is something that they actually hold true to their identity; they will go out and socialise using their e-mail address as opposed to traditionally giving out their phone number. So this is one huge area which other mediums and other sources of media can actually contribute to building these direct communication links with the young people, build a relationship with them and then actually potentially get a message through to them that otherwise would not be able to get through.

Other forms of media include ambient media, which are types of media that you may come across in an environment which is generally unexpected, for example an ad on the bottom of a glass and a whole variety of different types; pride placement, which has been seen to be very successful in a lot of music film clips and a lot of movies. People aspire to the people in the movies and if they are doing something that, for instance, might be socially responsible or healthy, they might look at that as being a trendy thing to do, which could be a great thing.

Priority association is not, at the end of the day, a top of mind topic - thinking about health; you do not walk down the street thinking: "How am I going to improve my

health?” Or: “How can I become more sexually safe?” They are not things you think about, so what has to be done is you have to get something that is going to attract the person to that particular area of information and then almost throw the health messages or sex messages or whatever it might be, into the mix, so that the key motivator is actually something that you are going to get out of it, as opposed to the key motivator being information which generally is not that palatable. And then obviously sponsorship and endorsement is a very powerful medium with young people, in that they are all looking for peer leaders and there are a lot of people in music and fashion that can influence and support many young people at once, just by what they do in their spare time. So, a combination of all these seemingly non-traditional mediums can create impact-full responses to traditional propositions that we are still here to save, for example, take fewer drugs, do less harm to each other, and practise safe sex. These seemingly boring messages can come across in a very innovative or interesting way.

The lack of consumption of main mediums has been due to what is called ‘media fragmentation’, which is the reduction of the effect of a main medium – main mediums being TV, print and radio. Once upon a time it was all just newspapers, then it was the newspaper and the radio, and then it was the newspaper, television and radio. Now it is all those things plus the internet, plus cable. Additionally, direct communication have gone through the roof with e-mail and things like that, so it is very difficult to chose one particular medium and use that to get through to the young people.

The other part is what the actual message is like when it gets to the other end, in that everyone has become (and I am not criticising anyone) but a lot of people have become more lazy and they are not looking at consuming huge amounts of information like they would read the newspaper or listen intently to a radio advert. They are more attributed to fast-moving images, the information getting across in a very short format in a way that has become a breed of lazy people in that they are not interested in reading, they want it spoon-fed to them and young are probably the largest group which are affected by this epidemic of ‘information consumption laziness’.

So, getting to the point, there are a lot of alternative communication devices that can be utilised to get the information to the young people and it is just important that when all this effort goes into researching a particular conclusion that various ways of disseminating the information are used, rather than the simply traditional options such as TV, print and the radio - there are a lot of other areas that can be utilised to get this message through. Just as important as the medium is the actual mechanism, as the information which is being delivered must be presented in a way that is familiar. Young people are used to seeing flashy adverts, flashy film clips, flashy everything. You cannot just expect to send them a big block of text with a whole lot of boring information on it and have them think that that is interesting. It simply will not work. So it has to be presented in a familiar way, in a language that they know and understand.

What we have come up with is a combination of ways to get through to young people and we feel we have an ability to communicate with a large volume of who we are deeming to be the ‘style-setters and opinion leaders’. That is a marketing coined

term, which talks about the people who are most influential in their peer groups, the ones that people aspire to be like, and the ones that influence the rest of their friends. Once we communicate with them we have the ability to ‘snowball’ or ‘viral marketing’ in that we speak to these young people and they become our advocates within the peer groups, which then roll these trends into the mass market by talking about these different issues that are being addressed, and establishing credibility for the sources of the information because it comes from the young people themselves. Then the mechanism is potentially a way that can be presented more simply in visual - ‘a picture tells a thousand words’ - is really what it comes down to, people are used to visual stimuli. We have a way, by use of a symbolic language, in which we can translate all the information into symbols or iconic images that can be quickly disseminated and remembered a lot faster than huge reams of information.

(Referring to screen) That is just a snapshot of the network and the people that are involved. They all operate on a system together. This is a snapshot of the integrated symbol set that we have which talks about different categories and instead of just simply taking a word and putting an image, we have created classes, categories and items, which can disseminate information a lot faster from one simple image. So this is really the next step in communication, things like SMS and picture messaging, where people can send a whole message, potentially a whole sentence in one symbol. (Referring to screen) these are just more examples of the symbols, each of them dictate different topics, classes and categories. And then, finally, as I mentioned before, a way to get the information across, and a lot easier way, is literally to read it out to them; so we are looking at translating a lot of the messages into characters and having them communicated to the young people in a language that they know and understand and are familiar with. One thing I have not mentioned is the fact that a key to getting information across to people, especially young people, is ensuring that you do not tell them **not** to do something, because, as you all know, as soon as you tell them not to do something, they will go and do it. So the important key is to provide alternatives and to be objective about the information.

So, just to recap, providing familiar information, through a trusted medium, symbolic representation or what advertising personnel would call ‘branding’, is a very effective and fast way to disseminate information and making it current or relevant to these young people in the day-to-day ways, ensuring the information is fashionably represented; it is not old school with big block text and just boring information, it is really flashy, nouveau and interesting, providing realistic and viable alternatives.

Thank you very much for your attention.