

SPECIAL TOPICS

ORIGINAL RESEARCH: FEATURED ABSTRACT FROM THE
19TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL

VERB™ Campaign: Extending the Reach of a National Campaign to Ethnically Diverse Audiences

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Track: Communications and Technology

The objective of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) "VERB. It's what you do." campaign is to increase and maintain physical activity among "tweens," or children aged nine to 13 years.

VERB™, a national social marketing campaign with ethnic market overlays, reaches all tweens across the nation with messages designed to get them up and moving. To ensure that all segments of the multicultural audiences are reached by the campaign, the CDC worked with four multicultural advertising/marketing agencies to supplement and complement the general market communication with culturally relevant messages and executions through appropriate channels. The campaign's efforts extend an invitation to Native American, African American, Asian American, and Hispanic/Latino tweens to take part in the VERB campaign. These culturally and linguistically relevant efforts also help to fill in the gaps inherent in general market communication channels that reach tweens in addition to those that reach parents and other adult influencers. The VERB executions expand campaign messages, reach, impact, and effectiveness.

To reach ethnic audiences, the four multicultural agencies have produced a marketing mix that includes television, radio, out-of-home, and print advertising; in-school promotions; viral marketing; events; and public relations. As is the standard for the VERB campaign, these products were developed on the basis of extensive formative and message-testing research. The culturally relevant products are also strongly rooted in the VERB brand strategy to maintain synergy with the general market efforts, which is critical to a seamless campaign.

The campaign's national longitudinal evaluation indicates that 63% of African American tweens and 70% of Hispanic/Latino tweens are aware of the VERB brand, exceeding the campaign's goal of 50% awareness. A special survey was administered in-language with Asian language-speaking parents of tweens living in the Los Angeles area. The results indicate that the parents surveyed were more aware of VERB than any other parental ethnic group.

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