

122 of 1000 DOCUMENTS

ADWEEK.COM

Adweek

June 1, 2009

Doing Good Means Doing Well

BYLINE: Michael Stone**SECTION:** COLUMNS; OTHER COLUMNISTS**LENGTH:** 761 words**HIGHLIGHT:** How the latest licensed products are bringing cause marketing to a whole new level

As President Obama encourages Americans to "do good" with their time and money, more and more consumers have been inspired to make a difference in their own and others' lives through simple, cost-effective ways. As such, there is an entirely new kind of cause marketing emerging, one in which consumers aren't just contributing to causes by purchasing products tied to a charity (the old, narrow definition of cause marketing). Instead, they're becoming actively engaged in advancing a social or general do-good agenda through their purchases. This is a new, more expansive definition of the term.

The state of the economy has added a layer of complexity to the process, of course. Consumers are searching for ways that they can both buy the essentials while still making what they buy meaningful and purchase products that serve functional purchases yet also provide the emotional satisfaction of doing good for self, family, community and environment.

Licensing affords them the chance to have both.

It provides both commercial and not-for-profit brands with a new opportunity to create products that actually motivate and encourage better behaviors. From an eco-friendly line of clothing branded by the Sierra Club that encourages more sustainable buying habits to a line of health and safety products with the American Red Cross emblem that makes it easier for consumers to act in a crisis, brands are furnishing consumers with the consummate win-win for the current times: "Help me, help you."

We are now seeing an infusion of brands developing products and services that help consumers achieve do-good goals, especially in categories where consumers are emotionally connected to outcomes.

For example, the marketplace is certainly not lacking brands offering health-conscious foods. But, in March, Weight Watchers announced the launch of 13 new licensed products in the sweet, baked-goods category for those looking to lose weight yet indulge smartly. In addition, the women's fitness club Curves has created a line of cereals with General

Mills to encourage women to eat better. The foods help Weight Watchers and Curves achieve their mission to make women healthier by encouraging better eating habits and allowing consumers to do good for themselves, while simultaneously reaching existing audiences and attracting new customers.

In a similar vein, NBC's showboat in alternative marketing schemes, *The Biggest Loser*, has partnered with yoga brand Gaiam to create a line of exercise films, workout videogames and even a line of fitness equipment. The weight-loss TV show is now also tied to dozens of General Mills' products in support of Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief charity. The top-rated reality show not only encourages Americans to lose weight through a weekly prime-time spot, but it also provides them the tools to get healthy at home and even throws in a contribution to a special cause for extra incentive, helping to fight famine and encourage a healthier America.

Outside of dieting and health foods, Coca-Cola has inspired green-buying behaviors with its 100 percent recycled plastic T-shirts at Wal-Mart. In addition to furthering the beverage brand's image as a sustainable corporation, the shirts led WalMart consumers to make greener purchasing decisions while educating them that eco-friendly and recycled fabric doesn't have to be expensive or uncomfortable.

Even the National Trust for Historic Preservation has awakened to the trend, launching a line of authentic moldings sold exclusively at Lowe's under the brand "EverTrue." The collection's six styles, inspired by homes in six American cities, represent some of the homes the National Trust has long aimed to preserve. The collection helps increase awareness for the National Trust's cause, generates new forms of revenue for the nonprofit organization and provides consumers with a trusted and easy way to preserve historic homes authentically.

These innovative brands not only convey their agendas to consumers through new products, but they also encourage consumers to embrace and advance their objectives by providing them with attractive means to do so. Through licensing, they are finding relevant ways to encourage healthier, greener, safer and better behaviors by capitalizing on the power of their brand with a consumer audience.

Michael Stone is the president and CEO of the global brand licensing agency the Beanstalk Group. He can be reached at (212) 421-6060, or by visiting www.beanstalk.com.

Related: "Licensing Deals Spark Shelf Interest"

LOAD-DATE: June 7, 2009

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

DOCUMENT-TYPE: Print

PUBLICATION-TYPE: Magazine