

What is really going on?

Each day more than 1,200 kids nationwide drop out of high school. In 2005 we launched the “Boost up” campaign for school drop out prevention. “Boost-up” is founded on the insight that most students who drop out of school actually want to graduate but face immeasurable difficulties in doing so. The campaign sought to change the perception of these kids from “potential drop-outs” to “potential graduates” by chronicling their fight to graduate. In celebrating their fight we wanted to give them a Boost and incite friends and family to do the same.

Currently the campaign is doing a good job of bringing to life their fight. It is seen as truthful and is successful at letting these kids know they are not alone. But while the campaign is emotionally engaging, it needs to be clearer about what people should do in response— it lacks a clear call to action.

For its third year, we need to take the campaign into its next phase by leveraging its strong emotional resonance to drive people – students, parents and the world – to take action.

What is our challenge?

We want to make “Boost-up” a verb, not an idea. We want to activate the Boost up community – compel peers, parents and the broader community to take an interest and do something which gives these kids the boost they need.

Whose time are we after?

At risk students: At risk students and drop outs themselves are often the most influential peers when it comes to advising other at risk students. They have the ability to be the most empathetic, to tell their peers that their not alone, and the most persuasive, as they are often already familiar with the emptiness of doing nothing all day. We want our campaign to grab the attention of these students, drive them to the boostup.org website and ultimately compel them to stay in school. In underscoring the triumph that staying in school represents we want to also encourage these students to use their knowledge/experience to persuade other at-risk students to stay in school.

Peers: The kids who go to school with them. These kids want to help. They try to talking to friends who are thinking of dropping out, try to shake them and wake them up to the stupidity of what they’re doing but most of the time they feel it’s hopeless. There’s only so much they can do. And ultimately the student themselves makes their own decisions. We need to be the voice which inspires these kids to keep at it. We want them to give their friends a boost. We want the campaign to give them the tools to do this.

Parents: parents of at risk students are the single most important person when it comes to an at-risk student’s fight to graduate – whether it’s the inspiration they provide, or just the simple act of making them go to school. But often these parents are their wit’s end. They’ve tried everything, they’ve resorted to punishing, they feel alone, guilty and hopeless, and they blame the kid and the school. The kid feels guilty and starts hiding things from them. The parent is ignorant. The dialogue breaks down. The support disappears. These parents crave constructive advice on this situation – what is the one real thing that they can do to help their child - they need to be reminded of the value of positive encouragement and how important they are to their child’s success. We want them to boost their kids, not blame them.

Marketing departments: Finally we want to appeal to brands and marketers talking to the teen audience to get engaged. With philanthropy increasingly becoming critical to the credibility and respectability of a brand, marketers are looking for opportunities to be altruistic in a way which enriches their brand and engages their audience. We know that sports and music and other community activities are often the only thing keeping these kids at school, we want to incite brands to become part of these communities by providing the Boost that will keep them together – whether its basketball sneakers, a baseball, music, art – the opportunity to provide the Boost these kids need is an opportunity we want to offer them.

What is the brand's POV?**A Boost makes the difference**

These kids want to graduate but need some help from those around them to keep them going. Often they don't have a mentor looking out for them or someone to believe in them. They need to know they're not alone. They need to feel there's someone who's backing them. A boost is anything which helps them and tells them someone believes in them, which keeps them going. Whether it is a message of encouragement, a football, even an alarm clock – a boost can be the single thing to get them from apathy to action.

What is the brand's tone of voice?

Real, direct, energized

Creative starters (including one non-traditional media idea)

- We know sports and music stars have a strong influence on these kids – especially when they have been through something similar. How can we involve these type of celebrities?
E.g Kayne West – dropped out of school, his mom kept him going
Vin Diesel – Was going to drop out of school, went to a school outing to the cinema and decided he wanted to become an actor
- How can we make the website more active as the place to give a boost – chat rooms, pre-drafted messages of support, stories of people who received a boost and what they became etc
- How can we take Boost into their world – how can the campaign itself be more of a boost?
e.g Boost Sports league
- Create student videos which focus on the peer relationship
- Research indicated the overwhelming need to help parents with this issue. How can we create a “parent module” of specific communications and resources under the overall Boost idea?