

Staples Taps Facebook to Help Young Customers Give Back

By [Fred Aun](#), ClickZ, Jun 18, 2009

A new social marketing campaign from Staples aims not only to drive young people to stores, but also to help them lend a hand -- or a Sharpie, as case may be -- to the less well-off.

The office and school supplies retailer tapped New York agency Mr Youth to create a [Do Something 101 Facebook page](#) and an ["Adopt a Pack " Facebook application](#) where participants can tag friends, virtually "fill" a backpack with school supplies, and then go to a Staples store to buy the supplies they selected and have them donated to other students who are living in poverty.

The target audience is high school students and teens who might want to assist the 13 million children in the U.S. living in poverty.

Mr Youth Managing Partner Doug Akin said the campaign will be publicized through outreach to youth bloggers and some online media. He declined to say how much the campaign will cost and he said it's too early to provide metrics about its early success. "There's definitely been strong adoption of it and users are tagging many friends and creating multiple images," Akin said.

Although Staples and the national non-profit organization DoSomething.org joined last year for a similar school supply drive, the partners decided this year's effort would have social networking "at its core to drive participation and build buzz," according to a statement.

Mr Youth specializes in event marketing and word-of-mouth campaigns, and often uses social networks to get the word out. Clients have included Microsoft, Pepsi, Macy's and T-Mobile. Akin said the agency focused on Facebook for the Do Something 101 campaign after noticing there was a "lot of unique tagging happening" between friends on the site with people spontaneously tagging friends with random photos and images.

"We thought it would be an interesting way to reach the social network world," Akin said. "A lot of teens need school supplies. We used the power of Facebook to distribute our message."