

Staples conducts cause effort as part of back-to-school campaign

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July 20 2009

FRAMINGHAM, MA: Staples is conducting an integrated campaign promoting its stores as back-to-school shopping destinations, highlighted by a cause effort urging teens to donate school supplies to the less fortunate.

The cause campaign, a partnership with nonprofit DoSomething.org, encourages young adults to collect school supplies and drop them off at local Staples stores, or donate \$1 to the cause. Called "Do Something 101," it also reflects teenagers' clout over back-to-school shopping decisions, said [Paul Capelli](#), VP of PR at Staples.

"It's really designed to speak to the teen audience, which we found is becoming more and more influential and encouraging their moms and dads to bring them to shop," he said. "And it helps us to engage with the teen audience and make them feel good about shopping at Staples."

The cause campaign is primarily reaching out to teens via Web methods, including a [microsite](#) that shows consumers ways to participate and a Facebook brand page and application. The company, aided by Tilson Communications and social marketing agency Mr. Youth, also created print, radio, and Web PSAs for the effort, starring celebrity spokeswoman Ciara. Mr. Youth is also conducting outreach to cause and teen blogs, said Doug Akin, managing partner for brand development at Mr. Youth. The company will also hold a "bag-stuffing" donation event in New York for the cause effort, which extends until September.

For the overall back-to-school campaign, the company conducted a media tour for Mike Miles, its president and COO, and participated in a bell-ringing ceremony at the NASDAQ stock market.

During the summer months, parents and teenagers make up a greater portion of the company's customer base than other months, said Capelli.

"It's the time of year when we are most focused on consumer marketing, as compared to the rest of the year, when we are very small business focused," he said.

For the overall effort, Staples conducted media outreach to business-focused print and broadcast media, pitching back-to-school season as an economic indicator, as well as consumer media and mommy bloggers, Capelli added.

The campaign's budget is undisclosed. Staples does not have an AOR, but Weber Shandwick, Taylor, and RF Binder are on its agency roster for project work, said Capelli.

The company ran its "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" TV advertisements as part of the overall campaign, which promoted July 15 as the first day of back-to-school shopping season.