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Silver Anvil Awards, Case '01 7E "Levi's Tunes Into Teen Issues- Music and Gun Violence" [http://www.prsa.org/\\_Awards/silver/html/6BW0107E13.html](http://www.prsa.org/_Awards/silver/html/6BW0107E13.html) pp 1-4

### **Synopsis**

For several decades, Levi Strauss was the most popular blue jean brand and it was recognized as an American icon. However, beginning in the late 1990's, new blue jean styles and designers emerged, and the contemporary image and sales of Levi Strauss diminished. Levi's joined with Ketchum in 1999 and took a proactive public relations approach to revamp Levi's image and to regain its popularity among American teens. Levi's and Ketchum created a new advertising campaign that targeted teens through music and promoted a good cause. Levi sponsored a summer concert, Levi Fuse '99, and collaborated with PAX, a non-profit organization that endorsed ending gun violence. The success of Levi's Fuse '99 inspired Levi's to pursue a 23-city music tour featuring D'Angelo, a double platinum R&B artist, and to renew its partnership with PAX.

Levi Strauss' "Levi's Presents D'Angelo tour in 2000" successfully targeted teens and created awareness about ending gun violence. Due to a limited tour budget, Ketchum targeted print and broadcast media outlets familiar to teens. Ketchum focused on national media and selected 10 markets from the 23 tour cities. Levi's and Ketchum's marketing campaign successfully improved Levi's contemporary image and increased awareness about ending gun violence among teens.

## **Analysis**

### **Research**

Ketchum researched numerous aspects of the marketing campaign before developing a final advertising campaign. Ketchum researched teen markets and discovered advertisers' messages effectively reach teens through music and promoting a good cause. The Levi's Fuse '99 tour was created to test the effectiveness of a music sponsorship and PAX partnership concert. The success of the '99 tour encouraged Levi's to sponsor the much larger, "Levi's Presents D'Angelo tour in 2000." Ketchum and Levi's selected D'Angelo by investigating popular teen musical artists. D'Angelo was featured in media publications popular among teens. Levi's pursued its partnership with PAX, which also targeted a concerning issue with teens.

However, Levi's and Ketchum failed to research and improve new jean styles. Levi's could have taken this opportunity to present a new hip style of jeans, while also endorsing its presence as an American icon. For example, during Jell-O's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, Jell-O introduced its new champagne gelatin. Jell-O effectively celebrated the longevity of its production, and promoted its ability to remain contemporary. Levi's and Ketchum could have conducted surveys and held focus groups with teens in order to determine what contemporary jean styles teens liked. This information could have been applied to developing a new style of Levi's jeans, which could have been presented at the 23-city music tour.

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### **Objectives**

The primary objective of Ketchum's campaign was to improve Levi's reputation as a contemporary jean brand among teens and to increase teen's desire to purchase Levi's jeans. The objective did not fulfill the SMART criteria for a successful goal. The objective was simple and specific. It was attainable and realistic and a reasonable budget of \$220.0, not including D'Angelo's fee, was specified. The objective was improvement oriented, however, it was not measurable. The objective was not time-bound. The number of people it wanted to influence was not identified, nor was the amount that it wanted to increase sales by. Although the Levi's campaign did gain the attention and participation of teens, its influence on teens purchasing of Levi's was not accurately evaluated.

### **Identification of Publics**

Levi's and Ketchum's primary public's were teens and teen-focused media. The campaign ignored all other age groups and did not include Levi's employees. Involving employees with celebrations was an effective approach Jell-O used in gaining media attention for its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Ketchum limited its media outlets to print, broadcast and online publicity popular among teens.

### **Public Relations Strategies and Tactics**

Levi's and Ketchum incorporated one-way and two-way communication tactics to reach its teen audience. Levi's two-way communication tactics included sponsoring a

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popular musical act, promoting an important teen issue, and targeting media outlets popular with teens. Levi's, D'Angelo, and PAX collaborated at the "Levi's Presents D'Angelo tour in 2000" to encourage ending gun violence. The tour provided teen spokespeople who addressed the relationship between Levi's and PAX and the importance of ending gun violence through media interviews and by directly speaking with teens. A Levi's Denim Wall was present at the concerts, and Levi's donated \$1 to PAX for every signature that was contributed to the walls. A Virtual Denim Wall was also available to people not present at the concerts and it could be accessed and signed online.

Levi's and Ketchum's one-way communication tactics included a kick-off announcement about the 2000 tour and it was held at a Los Angeles high school. The event featured D'Angelo, who was the first to sign the Levi's Denim Wall. Levi's and PAX also honored the school's Peace club for its efforts against gun violence. A PAX booth was also located at the front of every venue where Levi's/PAX teens could speak with teen consumers and they could sign the Levi's Denim Wall.

I think incorporating musical artist D'angelo, was an effective means to generate teen's support for ending gun violence and advertising Levi's jeans. D'angelo was recognized as the number one spot on the Billboard chart, and he was most likely the best possible teen sponsor. I still believe that Levi's could have capitalized on the event by introducing a new style of jeans. This would have promoted and supported their image as contemporary.

### **Evaluation**

Levi's and Ketchum hired Sponsorship Research International to measure the impact of the 2000 concert tour in five of the major concert cities. Concert attendees were screened at the concert and phoned the following week to complete a survey. Two-thirds of the attendees recognized Levis as the sponsor and 57 percent of attendees said they saw Levi's in a new hip light. The surveys also indicated that attendees were more than twice as likely (28%) to purchase Levi's jeans than non-attendees (12%). These evaluations only examined the attitudes and intentions of consumers after the concert. It did not measure the actual purchasing behavior of Levi's jeans consumers. Comparing purchasing statistics from before and after the 2000 tour would have revealed purchasing differences. Comparing consumer's attitudes before and after the 2000 tour would also provide a more accurate portrayal of whether attitudes were changed.