

FROM XS-MEDIA.COM:

The Colloquial Campaign

Every now and then, we witness a cultural phenomenon. Every now and then an advertising campaign comes along that reaches far beyond the imagination and, within an instant, cements itself into the lexicon of the global consciousness.

And so I say to you, "Whassup?"

The current Bud campaign, depicting a group of friends greeting each other with the "Whassup" tagline and ending the spots with the equally catchy "True", first aired only 6 short months ago. In the process, it has quickly ascended to phenomenon status, and joins the elite group of successful Colloquial Campaigns.

The "True" campaign began as a short film by music video director Charles Stone depicting his real-life friends exchanging the catchphrase. The film traveled the US film festival circuit, generating buzz through the industry. Yet, it was Budweiser who first approached Stone with the idea of creating an ad campaign out of the short. And a phenomenon was born.

The assimilation of other mediums into an ad campaign, whether a personality, an image, or a popular culture staple, has worked before.

The self-described "King of Beers", Budweiser could also be described as the "King of the Catch Phrase". The company has a long history of successful colloquial campaign dating back to the "Spuds Mackenzie" and "I Love You Man" spots, which had a tremendous presence in the US. And it's not just a matter of knowing what will register with the audience, but knowing when to

quit. Bob Lachy, Vice President of Brand Management at Budweiser, says:
"The challenge for us is to keep it fresh. You have to be careful you don't overstay your welcome."

"This absorption into commercial advertising of elements of popular culture is a proven winning formula," says Stefan Schachter of Woosh Three, Inc., an ad agency in Portland, Oregon. "We're bombarded by popular faces, popular styles, and popular meaning constantly. From the dawn of animation, through the animal craze, and all the way to today's saturation of urban culture into mainstream advertising, the industry is paid well to have its finger on the pulse of the global consciousness."

Schachter insists that these successful campaigns aren't creating anything new, just tapping into what is already there.

"The campaigns that truly resonate are those that latch onto themes which already exist in the public mindset, simply complimenting that with a new approach of a freshly painted, albeit established, idea."

Nevertheless, all of this begs the question - What's the Magic Formula?

According to Michael Human, an independent market analyst based in San Francisco, there is none. "When these campaigns assimilate their way into the lexicon of the country, if not the better part of the world, you can either strain yourself to find a method to the madness, or you can shake you head and tip your hat."

It's genius really. Budweiser is selling to the public consciousness what it already has, essentially selling popular language back to those who made it popular.

True.