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→ Little Moments, Big Magic

Mentoring Campaign Case Study –
Big Brothers Big Sisters of America



Success Story

Providing Positive Role Models

There are approximately 14 million young people in America who are at risk of not reaching a successful adulthood. With the presence of a mentor in a child's life, their horizons are broadened, and their lives can suddenly have much more potential. According to a national study, young people who are mentored through Big Brothers Big Sisters are 46% less likely to use illegal drugs, 53% less likely to skip school, are more confident, and have better relationships with their families.¹

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) has been the expert in youth mentoring for nearly 100 years. BBBSA is the largest and most effective youth mentoring organization in the country, currently serving 234,000 children nationwide in more than 400 programs.

In 2001, BBBSA set a national goal of serving one million children by 2010. To help achieve this significant objective, they involved the Advertising Council and pro-bono advertising agency Lowe NY to develop a national marketing program to seek volunteers by showing the joy and simple rewards of being a Big Brother or Big Sister.



Approximately **14 million young people** in America are **at risk** of not reaching a successful adulthood.

¹ (1995) Making a Difference: An Impact Study of Big Brothers Big Sisters. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures

Touching the Audience – Strategic and Creative Development of the Campaign

Changing Misconceptions

Mentoring was already on the public’s radar screen and seen as a pressing issue. Existing research indicated that BBBSA enjoyed high brand awareness, and people thought mentoring to be an important issue. However, there were misperceptions about the actual experience of being involved with the organization. This was ultimately limiting participation. This insight presented itself during initial focus group research conducted with the target audience, potential mentors.

When talking broadly about the notion of mentoring a child, focus group respondents associated BBBSA’s children as those in severe need, requiring extraordinary time and care. The focus groups also revealed that they were not volunteering, not because they did not want to help, but because they felt inadequate to do so. They thought that the effort required would come from a “Mother Theresa” type person. There was also a misperception that becoming a Big Brother or Sister demanded an outsized time commitment.

However, despite being intimidated by the notion of committing to help kids in need, adults wanted to help in some way. They strongly believed that mentoring is an important issue and, especially after September 11, overall sentiment in America shifted toward focusing on “the important things.”

The campaign team realized that in order for people to get involved with BBBSA, the mentoring relationship needed to be redefined as a shared and simple experience for the ‘Big’ and the ‘Little.’ Ultimately, people did not know how easy it was to get involved, and that there were a number of ways they could do so. The team knew that this simplicity would have to be highlighted in the creative work.

From this research, the “Simple Moments of Magic” idea emerged. The campaign would focus on adults who want to make a difference – from seniors to professionals to college students – and communicate that by becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, it is easy to bring a little magic into the life of a child.

TV Spot:
“Office”



Creating Change

Evaluating Campaign Impact

Launch of Campaign and Public Relations Initiatives

The campaign was released in October 2002. This launch involved distribution of campaign materials to over 8,500 media outlets including television, radio and Internet. Ad Council campaigns do not buy media, but rather rely on media donations, so it is important that campaign materials reach as many media outlets as possible, to spread the word as effectively as possible.

To bolster interest and awareness of the campaign at the time of the launch, the Ad Council worked with BBBSA to create a Bites and B-roll (BBR) package. It was distributed to local markets around the country to coincide with the distribution of the PSAs. Additionally, the team conducted press outreach with the media and advertising trade publications.



Voice-over: Think being a Big Brother means taking time out of your schedule to tutor a kid in algebra? Think again. To learn more about becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, call 1-800-412-BIGS.

As with any well-planned communications campaign, several tools were used in order to assess the campaign's effectiveness. These tools include measurement of donated media support for the campaign, tracking survey results, public relations impact, fulfillment results, and inquiries to BBBSA.

Donated Media

The Mentoring campaign received significant donated media support: 73 percent higher than the average media support for an Ad Council campaign. In just nine months (October 2002 – June 2003), the campaign received almost \$34 million worth of support in television, radio, Internet, and alternative media.

DONATED MEDIA TOTALS October 2002 – June 2003	
Medium	Donated Media (\$)
Broadcast TV	\$4,752,555
Cable TV	\$4,826,000
Radio	\$18,132,248
Spanish Radio	\$19,789
Interactive	\$5,831,842
Alternative Media	\$227,280
TOTAL	\$33,789,715

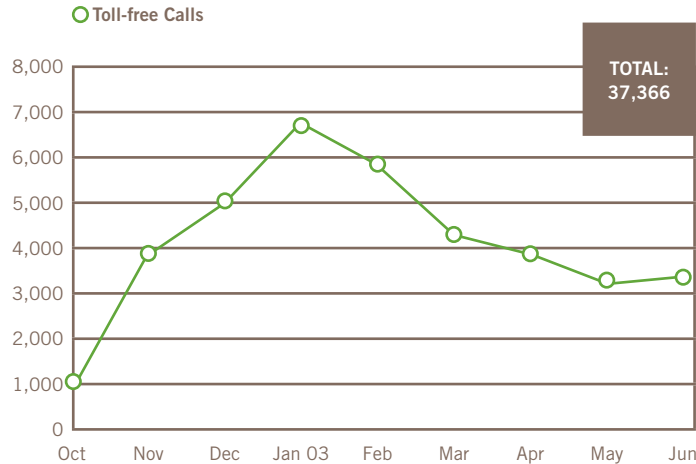
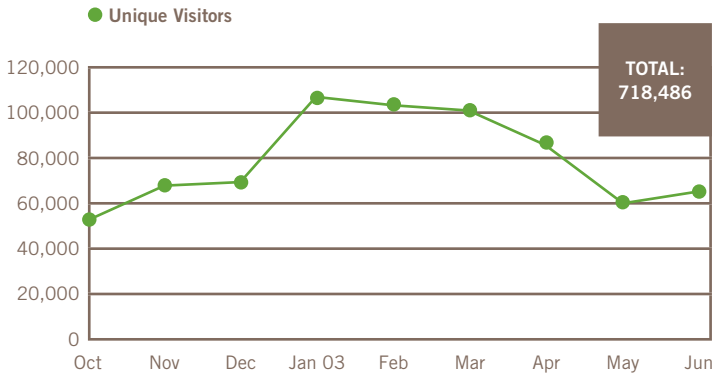
Data Monitoring Sources

Broadcast and Cable TV: SIGMA, a product of Neilson Media Research.
Radio: Verance Broadcast Verification and Monitoring Service.
Internet: Self-reporting by online media companies.

Public Relations Impact

While many media outlets ran the campaign's PSAs, the campaign also received extensive news media coverage, which expanded awareness of the campaign by means of news features and reports. In total, the BBR generated 156 news stories on the campaign in 80 local markets, with a publicity value of \$668,709. Based on

**WEBSITE UNIQUE VISITORS & TOLL-FREE CALLS:
October 2002 – June 2003**

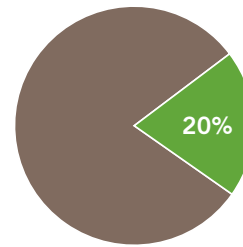


circulation figures of newspapers and magazines and impression levels of television news programs that featured the campaign, it is estimated that news of the campaign reached as many as 23,000,000 people nationwide.

Tracking Survey: Awareness, Attitudes and Behaviors

Prior to the national launch of the campaign, a tracking study of a nationally representative sample of adults was initiated, with a benchmark survey in September 2002. The postwave survey was conducted in June 2003.

It should be noted that during this nine-month period, the national PSA campaign was the only marketing program supporting BBBSA, which put the campaign in the fortunate situation of being in a “controlled” environment for evaluation.



Adults 18+

Recalls Campaign PSA

Those with recall of the PSAs were significantly more likely to feel that it doesn't take special skills to be a mentor (81% vs. 71% strongly / somewhat agree.)

Awareness: Awareness of messages in the media related to Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America improved significantly as a result of the campaign, rising from 47% to 59%. This awareness of the organization was largely driven by TV commercials (43%).

Attitudes: Overall, awareness and interest in the issue of mentoring strengthened. As mentioned, perceived importance of the issue was already high prior to launch of the campaign. At benchmark 22% of adults felt the issue of children needing mentors was important and were doing something about it or considering doing something about it. This increased significantly to 31% at postwave.

Conclusions

While three-quarters (73%) of respondents agreed that “you don’t need special skills to be a good role model for a child,” a measure unchanged from the pre-wave study, respondents who saw at least one of the PSAs were significantly more likely to agree than those who did not see the ads (81% vs. 71%).

Behavioral Changes - Public Response

The campaign encouraged viewers to visit the Big Brothers Big Sisters website or call its toll-free number to get more information about becoming a mentor. The results of the campaign were remarkable: from October 2002 to June 2003, there were 718,486 unique visitors to the site, and 37,336 calls to the advertised toll-free number.

Pre-campaign unique visits to the web site averaged 26,000 per month, and after just four months the site averaged 75,600 unique visitors, an increase of over 190 percent. Also, during the first four months of the campaign, there were more than 16,500 calls to the toll-free number, and calls increased from an average of less than 200 calls per month to a monthly average of approximately 4,100 calls, an almost 2,000 percent increase.

Impact on Inquiries

In the first nine months after the campaign was launched, applications to be a mentor increased by 75%. Prior to the campaign launch, on average BBBSA received 90,000 inquiries a year. From October 2002 to June 2003, there were nearly 620,000 inquiries directly to local BBBS agencies, an increase of almost 600%. And from October 2002 through June 2003, there were over 52,000 inquiries submitted by potential volunteers to the campaign’s national website.

This PSA campaign was the sole communications message of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, and demonstrated very strong results. Specifically, the Mentoring PSA campaign was notable for its:

- Success in creating PSAs that reflected a powerful insight into the barriers to action
- Strong ability to garner donated media support
- Success in driving the public to the advertised website and toll-free number
- Creation of greater awareness of and interest in participating in the organization
- Achievement in increasing the number of mentor applications



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