

The Power of Brand Couture



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Many times we are challenged to emphasize and reinforce our clients' brand personalities at exhibitions. And what better way to fashion brand personality than through the art of «brand couture» – the one-of-a-kind design of costuming to extend brand messaging. Whether supporting client goals, reinforcing brand essence – or personalizing important messaging, this type of brand fantasy can have an enormous positive impact.

Three projects – three different ways in which brand couture has helped solve the client's unique challenge and bring the brand experience to life.

Products Come to Life

In 1997, BASF, the world's leading chemical company, wanted to reinforce their reputation as an innovator in plastics technology. However, because they were new to the exhibition and booth space was assigned on a seniority-based system, BASF was located in the back of the hall.

«The company's main competitors, who were stationed front and center in the hall, had a history of amazing exhibit attractions,» says Patricia Hennigan, Impact's managing producer. «BASF had to come up with something really unique to generate attention, establish its innovative message, get people to the back of the hall, and create a truly memorable experience.»

To answer this challenge, a larger-than-life, must-see, one-of-a-kind event was created: A fashion show-starring, of all things, the plastics of BASF. Costumes were designed entirely from BASF materials-with phenomenal and breathtaking results. For the Home and Garden division-an outfit designed from a lawnmower, a chainsaw and artificial turf. An outrageous Victorian-styled dress made from car parts and electrical connectors represented the Automobile Industry. An Office Product mini-dress was composed of actual keyboard keys (broken off the keyboard in a late

night project team session) and trimmed with branded pens, while an outfit for the Recreation category was made of skateboard covers and fishing reels. The Recycling story was told through a show-stopping reversible dress that could transform into a shawl-one side layered with plastic beads, the other with carpet fibers-while the Global story was conveyed through a spectacular cape of plastic chips, complete with Audi grille arm pieces and a map of the world.

As the models strutted their stuff down the runway, the presenter spoke of important BASF facts and offered practical uses for the items that composed the costumes. The response? Fantastic. The client collected 95 % more leads than the previous year, reported a 40 % increase in booth traffic-and received TV news coverage. What's more, a business relationship was developed with a major toy manufacturer who, to this day, continues to do a significant amount of business with BASF.

Advertising Campaign Comes To Life

Tekelec, a company that provides equipment and services to the mobile communications business, wanted to integrate their current ad campaign into their exhibition messaging. This campaign involved a character known as



Meridia – Pizza Coat

WireGuy-a regular guy who had a tangle of different types of cables emerging from his shirt, representing all the different nightmares an IT professional might encounter in communication infrastructure. The challenge was to make Tekelec's existing ad campaign come alive in their Business Theater within their exhibit.

Although we were able to acquire the actor who posed for the ad – his wire shirt didn't exist. For the shoot, he had simply worn a blue work shirt, while the wires emerging from it were created in postproduction. In order to create this costume in the real world, a designer built the shirt from the inside out: creating a rigid undershirt – making small holes in the blue shirt-and then literally connecting the cables through the shirt to the underlayer, as one would connect them to the back of a computer. When worn by the actor, the result was an exact replica of the character used in the ad campaign.

Tekelec sponsored a full-page ad of the character in the exhibition magazine-and as the show began; the character took the stage to represent the client in distress in a fast paced theater presentation about «Tekelec to the rescue.» As people recognized WireGuy, a celebrity was born -attracting much attention and buzz for the Tekelec booth. Tekelec's ad had been brought to life-literally enhancing brand recognition and memorability with impressive results-and a very happy client.

Brand Messaging Comes to Life

Meridia, a weight loss medication, was ready to launch. Their brand message: Balance-the combination of diet, exercise and lifestyle was key to weight loss. Meridia's goal was to bring this brand message to a live show.

Our idea was to create an audience-participated game show, with a whimsical set, inspired by the fantasy film «Beetle Juice» and hosted by two characters: Sid Saturated, an over-the-top personality who tried to steer the audience to make bad nutritional choices-and Lois Lean, a proper, healthy, angelic character, who encouraged the audience to do the right thing. Audience members were asked to spin a large wheel, and then answer questions related to the brand message to win prizes. To attract attention and give the characters even more impact, costumes were designed to create a visual message: Evil Sid Saturated wore a shiny over-the-top suit inspired by potato chip packaging-with labels of pizza slices, buttons of crackers-and an undershirt of sugar packets-while angelic Lois Lean wore a lovely, proper party dress, which displayed the food pyramid of healthy eating on the skirt. The juxtaposition of the two, combined with the entertaining and educational game, easily conveyed the targeted message. The show was a success – and the client, thrilled with the results. ◀

Regelmässig müssen die Marken herausgearbeitet und verstärkt werden. Die Kunst der Brand Couture – der einzigartige Designvorgang, Markenbotschaften «einzukleiden», ergibt wohl die besten Resultate. Drei Projekte, bei denen mit Brand Couture auf die Anforderungen des Kunden reagiert und das Brand Experience aktiviert wird.

1. BASF – Products Come to Life
2. Tekelec – Advertising Campaign Comes To Life
3. Meridia – Brand Messaging Comes to Life



BASF – Headpiece



Tekelec – The wired Guy