

Case Study

The Challenge: Run by the Paulist Fathers, a religious order of Roman Catholic Priests, Bustedhalo.com is an online destination for spiritual seekers run in a magazine or portal format. The organization’s mission is to reach out and open a continual and evolving dialogue with individuals who may have had a past religious foundation and who are looking for meaning in their lives. The organization does not limit itself to any particular background or viewpoint, but instead recognizes the universality of this urge to find meaning, and opens a door to dialogue in the hopes of reigniting a more passionate interest in Catholicism. The site’s tone and message is brash, youthful and open to possibilities, as opposed to being stodgy and dated.

While the site was doing okay, there was a desire to increase exposure and click-through in order to get the message out there and develop a strong online presence and name recognition. LGM creative was approached by the organization in the hopes of finding a way to drive relevant web traffic – basically, we would provide the hits, they would provide the content to hold them on the site. In addition, we were to work from a very modest budget. We, of course, accepted the challenge secure in the knowledge that solid thinking, strategy and creative could overcome budgetary limitations and deliver the results they were looking for.

What to Do.

Sure, the budget was limited, but that wasn’t our biggest concern. Insightful thinking and good creative can produce better results than those achieved with a big budget but run-of-the-mill thinking. We looked at a number of possibilities and finally settled on the idea of an interactive, Flash-based game. Given the under-40 general target demographic, we recognized an opportunity to go with an engaging, game-based format which would likely appeal to more technologically savvy web users. In terms of content, we needed something compelling, a little bit brash and edgy (though tongue in cheek as opposed to disrespectful, especially given the client’s particular sensibility), yet something related by content with the Paulists and their associated religious background.

The solution? We developed the ‘Whack A Knuckle’ interactive game, wherein you as the player assumes the role of a Nun in a classroom setting wielding a ruler with which she taps the knuckles on hands that appear on desks ahead of her for a high score. Accompanied by terrific artwork and an ominous pipe organ soundtrack, the game was engaging, appealing, and allowed for reasonable play before sending the player to the bustedhalo site. The invitation tagline “Whack a Knuckle, Save A Soul!” turned out to be a winner as well.

Where to Place the Media?

The web is a big place, and it’s easy to find sites that speak to parts of the target demographic. In this case, however, after compiling a short-list of about 30 or so potential sites, **we went back to the table and developed a profile of the BustedHalo target user.** Sure, age, gender, finance – the usual statistical guideposts were all part of the considerations. And, based on this, it was easy to see where there would be multiple fits; everywhere from humor to opinion to news sites. But at its very core, we asked ourselves **what was the basic common denominator of Bustedhalo users?**

Someone who was exploring, and actively searching for answers.

About themselves, religion, career – any number of things. Someone who wanted to know more, not just passively digest what was out there. Someone who wanted to know themselves – who would actively try to figure out what they were about and what their place was in the world.

Which led us to the concept of self-testing. At the time, the most popular self-testing site was tickle.com. It was where we wanted to be, but because of its popularity, was not in the project budget.

Until we got to media negotiations...

And The Results?

Having created the 'Whack A Knuckle' game and chosen a placement, we got down to the business of negotiating favorable placements with representatives from tickle.com. It was a long process, though by the end we did manage to come to an agreement on a discounted rate-package. What's more, through the course of our conversations, an additional beta-testing opportunity came up that allowed for even greater exposure on the same budget. After clearing the move with our client, we jumped in and started both the standard and beta-test campaigns. And the results were –thing short of phenomenal.

Prior to our work, the site was receiving, on average, 3000-4000 unique visitors per month. **As a direct result of our efforts, one month after launch, that unique click-through visitor rate had increased more than twenty-fold to over 100,000 unique hits per month!** Clearly we had struck a nerve with our strategy and creative, and though the click-through rate eventually ebbed, **the permanent user base grew considerably and retention remained high after the close of the campaign.**

What's more, the humorous and interactive style of the ad drew attention of its own, eventually going viral (organically), and leading to even more click-through to the site.

We continue to work with busted halo.com on a by-project basis, and have executed a number of successful web-based campaigns on their behalf.