



Online Marketing Campaign Proposal for Cintas Corporation

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Fighting Fashion Faux Pas in Cyberspace

Background

Cintas Corporation is headquartered in Cincinnati, Ohio and provides corporate identity management services to over 800,000 businesses across North America. One of its largest divisions focuses on designing and distributing employee uniforms and apparel accessories. Cintas also creates customized promotional products for clients.

Concept

Digitize Cintas uniform designs and distribute customizable versions of them to businesses participating in virtual reality worlds (such as Second Life, There, Active Worlds, etc.) for use on employee avatars.

The fashion industry has a huge presence in virtual worlds because people want to make their avatars, the digital doppelgangers that represent them online, seem unique. Just look at [American Apparel](#) and all the creepy-sounding “skin shops.” While most of the attention goes to individual consumers, companies are increasingly setting up shop as well. And what organization would be complete without properly attired employees?

Witness this avatar for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.





The Riddle Report

Sure she looks okay, but would you really want to get the latest information on the tuberculosis threat from a woman ([who in real life is actually a man](#)) dressed like a hair stylist? People won't take her seriously as a representative of the medical profession unless she's wearing a white overcoat or a smock.

I envision uniforms that tastefully display a removable Cintas logo that can be replaced by the client's. Not like this freakish example of product placement below.



This poor soul actually turned himself into a walking billboard for Carrot Top, ugh!

In case you're wondering why I want to give the uniforms away rather than charge for them, it's because free stuff is much more likely to go viral. And if it becomes popular enough, the brand it represents may also receive a boost. Think of Adobe Reader, the thing you're probably reading this file on. Adobe makes it available at no cost so that everyone will get it, and once they do, they suddenly develop a craving for more advanced features. "Oh, you want to create your own PDF files? Then you'll need Adobe Acrobat, and that's going to cost you." It's the same principle behind the free uniforms; the generic offering will hopefully pave the way for premium product sales.

Audience

Present and future Cintas clients who are currently engaged in or considering becoming involved with virtual reality worlds.



The Riddle Report

I know that some of Cintas' clients include luxury hotels, and [Starwood](#), a hotel corporation that owns the Sheraton chain, is already active in Second Life and has debuted a new chain called Aloft there.

Objective

Distribute branded uniforms to five organizations within four weeks and gain coverage on three fashion blogs (like [Fashion Police](#) and [Fashion Victim](#)).

The numbers I stated above are completely arbitrary and subject to change; I just wanted something that's specific and measurable.

Budget

According to [this AdAge article](#) the average Second Life startup campaign costs \$25,000. But since my proposal doesn't call for purchasing and developing virtual real estate (the largest expense virtual companies encounter), the cost should be considerably cheaper. If Cintas wanted to outsource the digitization as a way to save money, there are many developers listed in [Second Life's business directory](#). I'm sure Cintas could issue an RFP for their assistance and try to bid down their asking price.

Measurement

Use Technorati and Google Analytics to track any word of mouth generated by the campaign in the blogosphere.

There are lots of other tools one can use to measure results; I chose the two above because they're favorites of pr blogger [Steve Rubel](#).

