

MARCH OF DIMES

Problem: How do you boost donations and participation for a fundraiser at a time when non-profit dollars are less available?

Solution: Target individual donors at the community level to create a more personal impact.

BACKGROUND:

In 1916, the United States was hit with the first great polio epidemic, claiming Franklin D. Roosevelt became one of its victims. The first grassroots fundraiser for the foundation asked the public to send dimes to President Roosevelt at the White House. The name “March of Dimes” was then coined by entertainer Eddie Cantor as a play on the popular newsreel feature of the day, The March of Time. In 1979, the name “March of Dimes” was officially adopted by this charity.



Since 1970, the March of Dimes has hosted WalkAmerica and raised more than 1.7 billion to fund research, partnering with out of home companies on pro-bono campaigns to promote the event. In 2006, the March of Dimes was launching its Prematurity Campaign to raise awareness levels that 1 in 8 babies is born prematurely in the United States. The organization wanted to incorporate this mission message into all the promotional materials for its largest and most visible fundraising

event, WalkAmerica.

OBJECTIVE:

Following Hurricane Katrina, competition for non-profit dollars had become more difficult. The March of Dimes faced the challenge of creating an strong out of home plan featuring the pre-



maturity message while competing for a reduced amount of available funds. The campaign needed to increase visibility of this urgent health issue nationally and locally and effectively promote WalkAmerica.

STRATEGY:

The 2006 WalkAmerica advertising campaign targeted families in key markets with larger WalkAmerica walk sites. The more families the March of Dimes could reach in these key markets, the higher the participation would be for this annual walk. Historically, participants in WalkAmerica are: 75% full-time employees, 65% married, and 55% with children under 18. Walkers most often participate in WalkAmerica with their families, local hospitals, or as a member of one of the 20,000 corporate teams comprised of senior level management and employee participation. By focusing on out of home media in malls and transit vehicles & locations, the March of Dimes could penetrate communities and directly reach the target walkers in their own neighborhoods.

PLAN DETAILS:

The campaign included 30-sheets, bus shelters, and interior bus cards in the country's top 50 markets. March of Dimes also built a national campaign using advertising in malls across the US. The program ran in February and March to give the walkers advanced notice of the April Walk-a-thon.

RESULTS:

WalkAmerica 2006 raised \$114 million, up from \$108 million in 2005, and an online walker survey showed significant awareness levels for the "prematurity" message. The March of Dimes national sponsor was so impressed by the campaign that they committed to return to support WalkAmerica in 2007.

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