

WINDOW SHOPPING WITH STYLE

How do you mesh the versatility of a Web presence with the marketing impact of your store window? Pretty easily, actually.

BY PAUL CHIN



If consumers stop paying attention to storefront signs, the remedy isn't to create a bigger sign; it's to create a better medium. With the advent of the Internet, it's no surprise that it has become increasingly difficult for retailers to reach consumers with traditional advertising media. Roots Canada sought to bridge this gap by redefining what we have come to expect from window-shopping.

In September 2007, Roots unveiled an interactive window display at its Toronto flagship store on Bloor Street. It was the first of its kind in Toronto, and only the second in Canada (the first premiered in a Garage display window in Montreal at the corner of Peel and St. Catherine streets in August of last year). The display was developed by Montreal-based iGotcha Media, providers of interactive digital signage solutions, and consisted of a 60-inch image projected onto a touch foil attached to the inside of the store's window. This provided passersby with an intuitive touch-screen interface that was accessible from the outside.

"Consumers were able to interact with the Roots brand, regardless of whether the store was open or closed, and it positions Roots as a company that is innovative in all areas," says James Connell, Roots' Director of E-Commerce, Digital Marketing and New Media.

The high-resolution window display allowed Roots to promote its brand and connect with consumers using a new and eye-catching medium. The display could be used to access Roots.com, place online orders, collect



» GARAGE WAS THE FIRST RETAILER IN CANADA TO DEMONSTRATE IGotCHA MEDIA'S INTERACTIVE WINDOW DISPLAY

new subscriptions to the Roots Insider e-mail list, and promote Roots' environmental initiatives. It even introduced the Roots brand to a whole new segment of consumers by attracting the attention of passersby.

"We found it generated interest in Roots from a demographic that is traditionally less likely to enter a Roots store," says Connell. During the 10-week period that the interactive window display was installed, Roots saw an increase in sales of about 35 per cent — comprised mostly of new customers — in the Toronto area.

The media coverage and novelty of the display also helped increase the subscription rate to the Roots Insider e-mail list. This in turn bolstered Roots' eco-friendly brand and created awareness for its carbon credit initiative: for every new subscription to the e-mail list, Roots and the not-for-profit organization Zerofootprint carbon offset the equivalent of driving 50 km.

But as is the case with many new technologies, the inevitable question will arise: Will it catch on?

"The biggest benefit of this technology is the ability to draw attention to your brand and retail space," says Michael Terni, Executive Vice-President of iGotcha Media.

"You've got a marketing solution that allows you to communicate with your potential customers 24 hours a day. If the content is relevant, and you continue to keep it fresh and modify your campaigns accordingly, then I believe it will become an established medium." ■