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Tap Project Opens a Wellspring of Creativity

Ad Agencies Line Up to Take Part in Unusual Cause-Marketing Effort

By [Rupal Parekh](#)

Published: March 24, 2008

NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- What began as a grassroots effort in the Big Apple is shaping up into one of the biggest cause-marketing efforts yet.

Last week, the Tap Project -- David Droga's brainchild to bring clean drinking water to children around the globe -- took the country by storm, ramping up from a daylong affair in New York City to a weeklong effort from coast to coast.



Top agencies offered their creative chops to create city-centric promotional

The initiative, which started last year as a challenge from the staff at Esquire magazine to invent a brand, has blossomed beyond Droga5 into an unusual cause-marketing collaboration between competing ad shops. Via the project, restaurant patrons are asked to donate a minimum of \$1 for the drinking water they would normally get for

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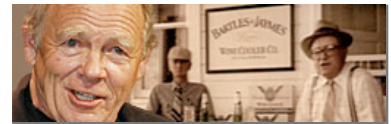
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campaigns. _____ free. For every dollar raised, the proceeds are funneled to UNICEF to help a child in a developing country obtain clean water for 40 days.

For Tap Project 2008, top agencies stepped forward to offer their creative chops, from Goodby, Silverstein & Partners and Wieden & Kennedy, which created city-centric promotional campaigns, to Barbarian Group, which created the taproject.org website, where donations can be made year-round.

Well-defined objective

Nearly 2,300 restaurants nationwide signed on for the "World Water Week" event that kicked off March 16 and wrapped March 22. Participating venues each received a toolkit containing TAP decals to be placed in window and packs of donation cards to be placed with a menu or with the bill.

"The best social marketing provokes an immediate and easy-to-execute reaction," noted Richard Earle, author of the book "The Art of Cause Marketing: How to Use Advertising to Change Personal Behavior and Public Policy," and senior associate at Leesburg, Va.-based Regis Group. In today's cause-marketing-crazed environment, a common pitfall of such campaigns is to gain sympathy without a clear objective for people to achieve, Mr. Earle said. The Tap Project, "has a very specific and well-defined objective. It is something very easy and clear that people can do to achieve the goals of the campaign. To pay a dollar for a glass of water is simple and ingenious."

Volunteering agencies were given two basic mandates: to recruit restaurants to participate and promote the Tap Project in local communities. The parameters were otherwise left intentionally loose. Agencies were supplied the UNICEF and Tap Project logo and asked to bring local flavor to developing marketing materials. "Allowing people to make the program their own is the key to the success of it," said Kim Pucci, marketing director for the U.S. Fund for UNICEF.

Publicis Groupe's Saatchi & Saatchi New York brought the message to taxi tops and Times Square billboards etched with the city's skyline, while on the opposite coast, a Publicis in the West-produced effort played on the city's soggy reputation. The copy: "Average Annual Rainfall: 36 in. Not everyone in the world is so lucky."



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Who's on tap

A list of top shops volunteering to create pro bono campaigns for the 2008 Tap Project. (Source: The Tap Project)

Boston: Hill Holiday

Chicago: Energy BBDO

Cincinnati: Empower Media Marketing

Dallas: Publicis Mid America

Los Angeles: TBWA/Chiat/Day, OMD, Tequila and Porter-Novelli

Milwaukee: Non Box

New Orleans: Trumpet

New York: Saatchi & Saatchi

Portland: Wieden & Kennedy

Richmond, Va.: Virginia Commonwealth University Brandcenter

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