

Search Site:

[HOME](#)

[INDUSTRY NEWS](#)

[MARKETING CHANNELS](#)

[MEDIA STRATEGIES](#)

Media Planning & Buying

- [Direct Marketing](#)
- [Integrated Marketing](#)
- [Local](#)
- [Ad Networks](#)
- [Ad Serving](#)

[CONSUMER STRATEGIES](#)

[SEARCH](#)

[CREATIVE](#)

[RESEARCH & METRICS](#)

[PEOPLE](#)

[BLOG](#)

[iMEDIA UK](#)

[iMEDIA ASIA](#)

[iMEDIA 中国](#)

[FIND & POST JOBS](#)

[iMEDIA SPOT](#)

[RESOURCE CONNECTION](#)

[PEOPLE CONNECTION](#)

[EVENTS](#)

MEDIA PLANNING & BUYING: IN FOCUS

How 5 brands scored free marketing



By Michael Estrin
April 07, 2009

- [PRINT](#)
- [SHARE](#)
- [COMMENT](#)

Tales of Colt 45

Brand: Colt 45

Agency: Cole & Weber United

Sample coverage: [MSNBC](#), [LA Weekly](#), [LiquorSnob.com](#)



Campaign: Looking to focus on a young, hip demographic, Colt 45 (perhaps best known as Billy Dee Williams' preferred malt liquor) used a microsite <http://www.workseverytime.com/home/default.aspx>, an underground comic book aesthetic, a painfully honest tagline ("Works every time"), and a partnership with Vice Magazine to share stories that revolve around the beverage.

What set it apart: "If you talk to people who drink Colt 45, one truth immediately comes to the surface -- they always have a story to tell," says Britt Peterson, partner at Cole & Weber United.

While those stories often involve a kind of drunken debauchery not commonly voiced in most alcoholic beverage ads, Peterson says the campaign worked because it didn't get in the way of how people actually use the product or try to force an artificial image. But the story-based approach also gave the campaign a life of its own because it asked people to share their experiences, which in turn prompted numerous reporters and bloggers to joke about their own memories of drinking Colt 45. While that may have made for some tongue-in-cheek coverage, it did garner press nonetheless, which helped make the brand relevant for a hipper demographic.

Advice: Stories aside, one critical factor for any campaign seeking to get press coverage is its ability to exploit something happening in social culture right now. "If you're tapping into something that's really happening, you have a good chance to get some media attention," Peterson says.

In Colt's case, the beverage resonated with budget-conscious hipsters because the low price was an implicit part of a highly stylized message, rather than overt offer of savings. The result was a message that was more of a genuine cultural contribution than an ad, at least as far as the target audience was concerned.

Michael Estrin is an editor at [BitterLawyer.com](#).

