Kiss and make up, says Benetton

PARIS, FRANCE: Benetton is courting controversy and encouraging the world to kiss and make up in its new PR campaign aimed at helping to rid the world of hate.

Benetton's latest social media project continues the fashion brand's tradition of using arresting images to create a PR furore. Its latest initiative sees the Italian fashion label use images of famous world leaders kissing to promote its involvement in the Unhate Foundation.

The Unhate Foundation, founded by the Benetton Group, seeks to contribute to the creation of a new culture of tolerance, to combat hatred and build on Benetton's underpinning values. As part of the company's social responsibility strategy, Benetton aims to make a contribution to the international community through the vehicle of communication, and relies on social players in different areas.

The Foundation also aims to be a think tank, attracting personalities and talents from the fields of culture, economy, law and politics, and people who have gone from simple citizens to leaders of movements, distinguishing themselves through their ideas and actions against the causes and effects of hatred.

A global call to action

The Unhate communication project is a global call to action that includes a series of coordinated initiatives and events, unveiled on 16 November in the main newspapers, periodicals and websites around the world. The central theme is the kiss, the most universal symbol of love, between world political and religious leaders, such as Barack Obama and Chinese leader Hu Jintao, Pope Benedict XVI and Ahmed Mohamed el-Tayeb, the Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and the Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. These are symbolic images of reconciliation - with a touch of ironic hope and constructive provocation - to stimulate reflection on how politics, faith and ideas, even when they are divergent and mutually opposed, must still lead to dialogue and mediation.

The new campaign, the creation of the Foundation and the other initiatives of the Unhate project reflect Benetton's wish to drive the desire for participation and change that animates the world's citizens, and especially the young, inviting them to play an active, central role in its initiatives, particularly through the internet, social media and other digital applications.

The 'Kiss Wall'

Visitors to the Unhate website can post pictures on a 'Kiss Wall' where their submitted image will be paired with another drawn from those already submitted. Visitors can share messages and embed their paired image on their own sites, blogs and social media platforms.

Screensavers and wallpapers featuring items of ad creative can be downloaded from the Unhate website, as well as copies of the Unhate film and its soundtrack.

Guerrilla launch activity took place in Tel Aviv, Milan, New York and Paris.

Results

Launched on Wednesday the 16 November, the Unhate Facebook page has nearly 900 000 likes on Thursday 17 November.

Alessandro Benetton, VP at the company and son of its founder, said in a statement: "It fits perfectly with the values and history of Benetton, which chooses social issues and actively promotes humanitarian causes that could not otherwise have been communicated on a global scale, and in doing so has given a sense and a value to its brand, building a lasting dialogue with the people of the world."

Unhate Campaign - the film

Unhate Campaign - Guerrilla actions: Milan

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