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Promoting Physical Activity among Tweens in Québec: the WIXX Multimedia Communication Campaign

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Mass communication campaigns are an integral part of a comprehensive public health strategy to promote physical activity. Based on the successful American VERB™ campaign (Huhman et al., 2010), Québec en forme developed the WIXX

multimedia communication campaign (www.wixx.ca). Québec en forme is an organization created through a partnership between the Québec government and the Lucie and André Chagnon Foundation to support and maintain active living and healthy eating among Québec youth.

The WIXX campaign is adapted to reflect Québec's cultural and language context. The campaign's adaptations also reflect changes in the use of the Internet and social media. The WIXX campaign's target population is tweens (aged 9 - 13 years), with an emphasis on girls, older tweens, sedentary youth, and those living in lower socioeconomic conditions. The campaign was launched in September 2012 throughout Québec and is slated to run until 2016. This article describes the development and early implementation of the WIXX campaign activities.

Objectives of the WIXX Campaign

- Increase knowledge, attitudes, and self-efficacy, as well as promoting favourable social norms toward physical activity
- Increase support from parents and other persons of influence
- Publicize opportunities for physical activity through mass media advertising and community-based activities
- Increase physical activity among tweens



Vision for Promoting Physical Activity

Physical activity is a fun and cool behaviour that is appealing for both boys and girls

Tweens try new activities that can easily be integrated into daily life and provide opportunities for fun, particularly with friends

WIXX Campaign Activities

Different sources of information were used to develop the WIXX campaign activities and messages (see Table 1):

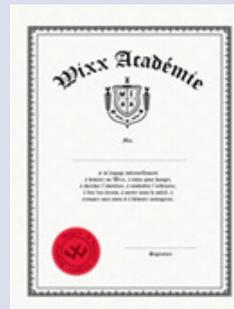
- Interviews with the VERB™ campaign planners
- Two surveys on media habits and correlates of physical activity
- Scientific literature on the impact of communication campaigns on health-related behaviours
- Focus groups/interviews to develop and pre-test the WIXX brand and campaign messages
- Focus groups/interviews to elaborate personas¹ and pre-test website navigation
- Post-advertising surveys

Early Implementation of the WIXX Campaign

In the late summer of 2012, the WIXX brand was first introduced to tweens during *KARV l'anti-gala*, a sponsored TV event. Tweens were invited to register their profile and order a *WIXX ambassador kit* from the website (Figure 1). This operation was closely followed by a very intensive paid advertising campaign (1200 GRPs)² to boost awareness of WIXX. Subsequent paid advertising campaigns were less intensive (200-500 GRPs).

Figure 1. The WIXX ambassador kit

Ambassador Kit:
Mail shipment that includes items to display in bedrooms (certificate, door hanger), items to wear (shoelaces, bracelet), a booklet and a sticker.



During the early months of the campaign, the concept of *WIXX Zones* was created (Figure 2), allowing schools, community centres and family events to introduce the brand to tweens by creating dedicated areas for WIXX physical activities to take place. The local partners were provided with specific toolkits and promotional items after ordering them online.

¹ Personas represent a major user group for a website. It gives a clear picture of the user's expectations and how they're likely to use the website. They describe real people and their backgrounds, goals, and values.

² A campaign that buys media time can purchase a certain number of Gross Rating Points (GRPs). If 1% of the target audience sees an ad once, the ad earns 1 GRP. A score of 100 GRPs means that an average person in the target audience saw the ad one time. A score of 500 GRPs means that an average person in the target audience saw the ad five times. (Adapted from: Coffman, 2002)

Table 1. The core components of the WIXX campaign

Components	Objectives	Activities
Branding & paid advertising campaigns	To associate physical activity with fun and coolness To increase awareness of WIXX and improve attitude toward physical activity	Three waves of TV advertising per year <ul style="list-style-type: none"> French and English ads VRAKtv, Teletoon, TeletoonRetro, Radio-Canada, TVA & CTV: WIXXTV Release of print ads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cool Magazine (Figure 1)
Partnership and local coalition support	To support the implementation of the WIXX activities by local partners	Tool kit for partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> WIXX Zones concept
Promotion and public relations	To increase opportunities to be active and to maintain high awareness of WIXX	<i>Dance Like a WIXX</i> with Davy Boisvert <i>Street Hockey</i> with Étienne Boulay <i>The WIXX Missions</i> (www.wixx.ca/missions) <i>The WIXX Outdoor Challenge Tour</i> TV and sport event sponsorships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KARV <i>l'anti-gala & MIX4</i> WIXX ambassadors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TV, cultural or sport celebrities Media releases and social media
Internet platforms	To promote physical activity	Three Internet platforms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tweens: interaction, games (www.wixx.ca), and videos (WIXXTV) Parents: online magazine (www.wixxmag.ca), Twitter & Pinterest Local partners: information (www.operationwixx.ca) & promotional items and toolkits (www.boutique.operationwixx.ca) Social media - brand content, Crowdsourcing and contests on Facebook and others

Figure 2. The WIXX Zone

A reserved space for tweens at existing WIXX events. Youth move and play simple games. They are given promotional items including collectible badges. Zones provide opportunities for youth to better understand the brand's message associated with the pleasure of moving.



Feedback from these early adopters guided the campaign team in developing more needs-oriented support. Thus, two major promotional events were launched within a year:

- *Dance Like a WIXX*: a choreography by Davy Boisvert, a popular Québec hip-hop dancer and host of a reality-show for kids (see [WIXXTV](#)). A tutorial of the choreography, posters and promotional items were available to whoever organized their own WIXX activity.
- The *WIXX Outdoor Challenge Tour*: a mobile adventure race and leisure event for families during the summer of 2013 and 2014. The 1- to 2-kilometre race course for runners included 12 obstacles, surprises, and a lot of fun.

The WIXX campaign also adopted an intensive web-based strategy, particularly during the second year of implementation. Three separate Internet platforms were created for each audience: tweens, their parents, and local partners (Table 1).

The *WIXX Missions* (Figure 3), based on the gamification approach (Miller, Cafazzo, & Seto, 2014), were created to prompt participation in physical activity. To earn and accumulate points and to receive mission badges, tweens had to provide proof (e.g., videos, photos or drawings) of their physical activity, with their parents' consent. Parents also had the option of receiving all updates posted by their child on the website. After earning a sufficient number of points, tweens received prizes (WIXX promotional items).

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

The WIXX campaign was developed to promote physical activity as a fun, cool and appealing behaviour for both boys and girls. During the early years of the campaign, one of the major objectives was to achieve a high level of awareness of the campaign. Interestingly, a mid-campaign survey showed that 70% of tweens were aware of the WIXX brand (Léger Marketing Inc., 2014). The next step is to intensify the community- and web-based activities. Hence, a mobile application for the WIXX Missions was released in the fall of 2014 and public relations, contests and support will be intensified to support local partners' appropriation of the WIXX campaign. Evaluation of outcomes is also ongoing.

Disclaimer:

The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the author/s and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of the Alberta Centre for Active Living or the WellSpring Advisory Committee.

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Figure 3. An example of the WIXX Missions



The missions are fun challenges that help youths move. A mission is composed of several steps; the young person must accomplish a number of challenges to earn points and badges per mission. The 33 missions, available on the website, consist of 116 fun and active games.