

Class project takes clients to cleaners

Contributed by Paul Mayne
Thursday, October 6, 2005

Statements Media founders and Western graduates Joseph Magnotta (left) and Adam Watson hope their venture pioneered as a class assignment, garment ad-bags, is just the first of many unique advertising concepts. When Joseph Magnotta and Adam Watson say their latest media campaign is "in the bag", it's in fact "on" the bag - dry cleaning bags to be exact.

Statements Media, founded by the recent Western graduates, wants to revolutionize what the two see as a static Canadian media landscape. Their first foray into doing so began earlier this month as 125,000 ad-bags were distributed to more than 100 dry cleaning businesses across the greater Toronto area.

"It's something that's never been done before," says the 21-year-old Watson, a graduate of the Richard Ivey School of Business. Magnotta, 23, graduated with a Political Science/Psychology degree.

"Consumers are becoming increasingly mobile and their busy, on-the-go lifestyle makes them harder than ever to reach. Our advertising targets specific audiences, in unique environments, at ideal points throughout the day."

Western News readers first learned about the business about a year ago. After winning the Robert G. Siskind Entrepreneurial Award at Ivey's annual feasibility competition last year, Watson chose to defer his HBA to launch the business. What was expected to be just a summer job quickly turned into a full-time venture.

"The last five months have been just crazy," says Watson. "But it wouldn't be fun if it was easy. If you're going to do something I say 'why think small'."

With plans to push the number of ad-bags per month to 500,000 by year-end, adding new clients and branching out into new cities, thinking small is not part of the game plan for Statements Media.

While Watson admits it was hard at first selling the idea of ad-bags to potential clients, he says businesses are now starting to see the ingenuity of placing their ads on dry cleaning bags.

"Our biggest selling point is that it has never been done before," says Watson, "But everyone would tell us they love being part of innovative advertising ideas - as long as someone else is doing it first."

Those thoughts soon changed and already on board with the ad-bag idea are Komandor @ the Bay, Chubb Home Security and Country Style Food Services, where director of marketing, Rita McParland, says her company is excited about the venture.

"We are an innovative company looking for exciting and innovative mediums to advertise through and we wanted to be involved with this new and dynamic company with a unique method of reaching the consumer," says McParland.

The demographics look good for the pair. Those who dry clean their clothes on a regular basis have an annual household income of more than \$100,000 and 75 per cent have a post-secondary education. Two-third of those picking up dry cleaning are women. For the most part the advertising is reaching high-end consumers.

"Adam and Joseph came to me with a vision that they have since made a reality," says Robert Talucci, President of Top Hat Cleaners. "These bags will undoubtedly change the dry cleaning industry. These men have found a way to hit this hard-to-reach segment at an opportune point of the day."

Watson says this means from the moment the ad-bag leaves the dry cleaners, the ad is on the go through the crowded streets of Toronto. Even when it finds its way into the customer's closet they'll be continuous exposure each time the closet door is opened.

For information about Statements Media, visit: <http://www.makeyourstatement.ca>