

# CLEAN AND GREEN

## #16 BEST LOYALTY PROGRAM

### DETOX SEATTLE

AGENCY: A Squared Group

CLIENT: Method

**EARTH-FRIENDLY** cleaning products maker Method has never lacked for fans. Almost since its 2000 beginnings, the company has had a small cadre of enthusiastic supporters telling their friends and posting in their blogs about Method's line of clean, green solutions—from laundry detergents and toilet bowl cleaners to air fresheners and baby wipes.

"That grass-roots support was crucial to its early success," says Amy Cotteleer, president of A Squared Group, Method's promotions agency.

But in an industry as competitive as cleaning products, a small, privately held brand can use all the friends it can find. So Method and A Squared went looking for a way to enlist these loyal hand-raisers on a wholesale basis, without waiting for new users to fall in love.

The answer they hit upon was to move into a specific market—in this case, Method's Seattle hometown—and identify the influencer homemakers in the area. "One of the things we specialize in is word-of-mouth advocacy," Cotteleer says. "In this day and age, one way you find individuals who are naturals at that is by looking at Web activity such as blogging. But they can come in any form: the president of the PTA or someone who's just very involved in her community."

In October 2007, A Squared compiled a list of these local influencers

and sent them a brown-bag invitation to bring some friends and spend an evening at Method House, a green home that was transformed into a 360-degree brand experience, complete with eco-aware drapes and carpets and in colors that suggested Method's biodegradable bona fides. Invitees were asked to use the brown bags to bring along their most toxic household cleaners for safe disposal. (Hence the name, "Detox Seattle.")

The experience-by-invitation approach was similar to a campaign A Squared had just run for the Nintendo Wii—but much harder. "People are eager to play with a Wii," Cotteleer says. "But you can't really say, 'Come



Method's "Detox Seattle" campaign offered a brand experience combining organic cuisine with safe disposal of caustic cleansers.

on over—you're going to love cleaning our floor and washing our dishes."

Instead, Detox Seattle offered event programming that gave a nod to Method's green credentials without hammering attendees with a sales pitch. Chefs gave hands-on cooking demonstrations that created dishes inspired by the organic, edible ingredients used in many Method products: fennel soup with saffron;

## IDEA TO STEAL: SEND SAMPLES

Don't let the relationship die once the buzz is over. On the first day of spring 2008, Method Mavens from the Seattle event received hand deliveries of local flowers, grown on sustainable farms and wrapped in recycled paper. Oh yes, and samples of a new scented toilet bowl cleaner.

a prawn salad with grapefruit, mint and avocado; and locally made lavender-scented truffles and chocolates. Bartenders blended and taught "sustainable sips," such as the Method Mint Mojito and the Lavender Grapefruit Martini.

"It was about embracing a lifestyle, not about soap," Cotteleer says. "Attendees thought it was primarily just a great night out with their friends. But inevitably, almost everyone came to our team at some point and said, 'Can I smell the soap?'"

The month-long campaign spiked area enrollments in Method Mavens, with 98% of participants signing on to the informal program. Just as important, attendees went on to create more than 100 unique blog posts and podcasts about their "Detox Seattle" experience, and to write hundreds of comments on the blogs and Web pages of others about Method, its products, and their new engagement with the brand.

"At the end, this wasn't about having people in for a night and giving them a couple of bottles of soap," Cotteleer says. "It was about creating a very positive first impression, then continuing that communication over the next year to convey that they were now part of a community and that Method valued their participation."—*Brian Quinton*