

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

“The Fifth Guy”

THE CHALLENGE

The Florida Department of Health set out to prepare people for the potential of a flu pandemic, but they faced a tough challenge: No pandemic on the horizon. Qualitative research showed, and quantitative research confirmed, that most Floridians doubted a pandemic would happen or, if it did, affect them personally. And they had a point: No one knows when (or if) a pandemic might hit.



TYPICAL APPROACH

Play up the risk. Hammer home some disastrous possibilities, and urge the prudent to prepare accordingly by taking steps to avoid passing on germs.

OUR APPROACH

Instead of pitching panic, we helped the health department focus on the behaviors they hoped to change – a series of hygienic actions such as washing hands, covering coughs and staying home when sick. Then we built the campaign around what does matter to people: Fitting in. Four out of five people wash their hands after using the rest room. So the central character in the campaign became the proverbial fifth guy, who practices poor hygiene and suffers the immediate social consequences

THE RESULTS

A post-intervention survey showed more self-reported incidents of hand washing, and a jump in the portion of Floridians covering their cough and staying home when sick. What's more, those exposed to the campaign were much more likely than those not exposed to be engaging in the target behaviors.

The Fifth Guy's success truly is contagious. The campaign has been adopted by other health departments across the nation including the states of Idaho, Missouri, Maine, New York, several counties in Ohio, and the cities of Sacramento and Los Angeles.



We sent the comic actor who played the Fifth Guy on a four-week media tour around the state, his urinal prop in hand. He made dozens of appearances on local television, talk radio and gathering spots around the state. One Miami TV report got picked up by 110 stations nationwide, reaching an estimated audience of 3.8 million. Check out the Fifth Guy TV spots at: www.5thguy.com