

Marketing's Greg Berumen and Public Affairs' Rich Morallo teamed up to produce day planners with a built-in safety message for students.

MTA's Day Planners for Students come with Built-in Safety Message

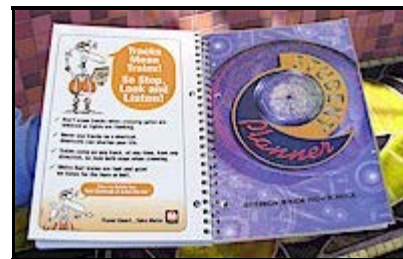
By GAYLE ANDERSON

It's not enough that Public Affairs says "Safety" hundreds of times a day. It's the hundreds of ways they say it, thanks to the innovative efforts of the communications team of Public Affairs and Marketing.

Waving the "Safety First!" banner of the Office of Safety, Systems and Security, the communications team's latest campaign to hit the LA streets is the "Student Planner," a real-time day-tripper for students that works just like the time management day planners at the office.

Rich Morallo, assistant communications manager of Public Affairs, came to Marketing with a challenge: "What can we do, new, that keeps our message alive?"

Student planners, a spiral bound notebook with a built-in safety message, was the creative answer. Coordinated by Marketing's Greg Berumen, senior communications officer, the planners were designed and produced for distribution to 5th through 12th grade students who attend schools that border the Metro Blue Line alignment.



The back cover features a strong message from MTA Safety Guy.

The MTA delivered more than 11,000 of the day planners to 19 junior and secondary schools in July with a cover letter from Public Affairs Communications Manager Linda Bybee inviting teachers to integrate the student planners into the daily curriculum.

"Setting priorities and breaking down large tasks into manageable pieces is a difficult but essential skill for students to master," read the letter. "We sincerely hope that the planners will assist in developing students' time management skills."

Equally clear was the strong safety message conveyed by the planner

itself.

The familiar MTA Safety Guy waggles his friendly finger on the back cover, which shouts his earnest message from a cartoon bubble: "Tracks Mean Trains! So Stop, Look and Listen!" A colorful map of the Metro Rail system is placed handily inside the back cover.

Inside the front cover is a clear, sparse warning on graffiti: "Tag? You're it!" The close-up image of handcuffed wrists says it all. Additionally, safety messages are interspersed throughout the pages along with daily attention-getters of fun facts, and inspirational quotes.

Since the outreach program started in 1999, Public Affairs staff and volunteers have flooded communities with their safe crossing message at schools, community events, businesses, organizations, and the advertising media.

"The MTA safety program will soon expand with the completion of the Pasadena light rail, which will connect to the Eastside rail line," said Morallo. "We are currently looking to secure a mobile van that we can take out to the schools, community centers and weekend public events to provide a multimedia train safety information center. It's just another tool to help encourage families to be careful when crossing the tracks."

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