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Starbucks, foursquare and (RED) Team Up for AIDS Funding


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From now until June 10, for every foursquare check-in at Starbucks, a dollar will be donated to Bono's AIDS fighting organization (RED). The promotion is just another way that Project (RED) is using everyday brands to help fight their cause in a simple digital way.

"We are excited that through (RED)'s check-in activation with foursquare, our customers have an easy way to help make a difference towards an AIDS free generation by 2015, a hugely important milestone in the fight against AIDS," said Vivek Varma, Starbucks public affairs executive vice president.

foursquare has taken the concept of non-glamorous couponing (now with geo-location capabilities) into a whole new arena by digitalizing the process and turning it into a Mayor-awarding game with some benefits, albeit light ones. This partnering begins to address questions about the substantial rewards foursquare will offer to keep the brand propelling forward.

And so with the increasing popularity of foursquare, now with more than 6 million users, the partnership with (RED) and their Rush To Zero makes sense in terms of leveraging check-ins for a good cause, and not just a cheaper Frappacino. It truly puts the action in the new term "donation by action."

"We love to see the ways that technology can be used to improve the world, and we are excited to see our community get involved in the effort to fight AIDS and raise awareness," said foursquare founder Dennis Crowley.

The initiative, called (RED) Rush To Zero, is a campaign that seeks to yield an AIDS-free generation by the year 2015. The campaign will be utilizing a series of digital and in-person events and experiences that deploys media's strong hold over social media, celebrities, big brands and of course, gaming. This particular part of the campaign includes the mass brand Starbucks, which will be donating a dollar to The Global Fund for every check-in.

Bono and Bobby Shriver started Project (RED) in 2006 to help build awareness of AIDS in Africa and obtaining funding to help the cause. Over the last few years, brands like Emporio Armani, Converse, Apple and more have joined the inspiring organization to convert their products to (RED) and be part of Bono's vision by donating a part of their sales to the cause. These funds are said to have reached over 7 million people in Africa and generated more than \$200 million, according to the (RED) website.

"At foursquare, we love to see the ways that technology can be used to improve the world, and we are excited to see our community get involved in the effort to fight AIDS and raise awareness.


This is the largest non-profit campaign that foursquare has been a part of and we are proud to be partnering with (RED) RUSH," said foursquare founder Dennis Crowley.


The success of the campaign can easily be measured by check-ins and amount of money collected but the real success lies in how organizations will find new ways of utilizing digital channels for a good cause without placing consumers in a predicament or laborious situation. The simplicity of just going to Starbucks and checking in, possibly as usual, makes the campaign playful but with a valid cause.


Daniel Scheffler is a writer who spends his time in New York, Cape Town and India. Follow him on Twitter @danielscheffler



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