



Chicago Bears' "One City, One Team" Campaign **Warms** the Windy City

By Jennifer Walker-Journey

Most Chicagoans have a warm-and-fuzzy feeling about their football team, so much so the Chicago Bears has scored sold out stadiums for its games since 1984. But after a heart-breaking season last year that kept the football team out of the Super Bowl playoffs and unable to claim the victory it barely missed out on the year before, the franchise realized it needed a morale boost. So it focused on the people who love them the most – their fans.

The idea was to find a creative way to reconnect the fans with the team and make both feel, well, like they were given a great big bear hug, says Scott Hagel, senior director of corporate communications for the Chicago Bears.

The franchise was not looking to sell tickets or merchandise, says Adam VanOhlen, creative director for Two by Four, a full-service advertising agency based in Chicago. "They simply wanted to make people feel good about the Bears as a brand, and to reward the loyal fan base for supporting the team."

It was the first time in years that the Bears considered launching an advertising campaign. The last time was nearly five years ago during the transition from the old Soldier Field to the new one. That campaign was geared toward personal seat licenses and pushed ticket sales in the team's interim location at the University of Illinois in Champaign, Ill.

The Bears interviewed several agencies, eventually selecting Two by Four to create a campaign that was strictly brand-related and fan-focused. Two by Four has designed campaigns for the Chicago White Sox, Four Winds Casino Resort, Firestone, Wrangler, Chicago Sun-Times and Grainger, to name a few.

For this campaign, the team at Two by Four had to get creative. As inspiration, they centered on a quote by Virginia McCaskey, daughter of team owner Geroge Halas: "Baseball divides Chicago; Football unites." The quote set the tone for the campaign that was designed to tie the city, its people and the team, into one inseparable unit.

"Our feeling was that the values possessed by the people of Chicago are embodied in and shared by the Chicago Bears. So our ads featured an equally weighted art direction consisting of fans and players with headlines that highlighted their shared values," VonOhlen says. Thus, the theme "One City, One Team" was born.

The campaign kicked off just before the 2008 season opener. Each features actual Chicago Bears fans in different scenes of admiration. One shows a photo of bundled-up fans watching a game with the wording: "We don't shiver. Our teeth clap." Another reads, "Respect your elders. Season tickets are inherited."

Others highlight the dedication of fans with the strength of players with wording such as "I'll never leave. You can't move me," "I punch the clock. I'll clean yours," "I don't run my mouth. I let my play do the talking," and "You need a stiff upper lip. I'll split yours in two."

And some hit on tradition, with three generations of men and the wording, "First string. Second string. Third string," and a Chicago skyline scene paired with an image of Soldier Field that simply reads, "Home. Team."

Hagel said the franchise's hope is that every type of Bears fan – casual or hardcore – would be able to identify with the different parts of the campaign, which is one reason why real Bears fans were chosen to be featured in the ads instead of models.



“Obviously, there are a lot of people out there sending out messages about the Bears that we have no control over...so we wanted to make sure we were part of that conversation as well,” Hagel recently said in a Chicago Tribune article about the campaign. “This certainly was a way we could be out there in very bold fashion and say, ‘Hey, this is what we think we’re about. We think you’re just like us. We all are a part of Chicago. We all represent one another.’”

The ads were adapted for radio and television as well as several outdoor venues, such as outdoor rotary boards, bus kings, bus shelters, transit interior signage and El Platform two-sheet rails.

“For us, outdoor was the most natural place for this campaign to live,” VonOhlen says. “Because we were expressing that the people of Chicago and the Bears reflected the values of the city, it made perfect sense for those statements to be read in the outdoor Chicago environment.”

The campaign has resonated well with the public. VonOhlen says the ads have received positive press in both Chicago newspapers.

The campaign appears to have accomplished the goal, Hagel agrees. “It absolutely has strengthened the connection with our fans.” Hearts within the Bears franchise also have been warmed, Hagel adds. Management is pleased with the results of the campaign. And the players certainly aren’t complaining.

“When the players see themselves on a billboard, it’s clearly a neat thing to see,” he says.

“But more importantly, Bears fans have given us enthusiastic feedback

in letters and e-mails sent to both the team and the agency,” VonOhlen adds. “And at the end of the day, that was the only way we were measuring success.”

