

TAXI

Taxi campaign touts Belugas, not tchotchkes, for Christmas

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Taxi's West Coast shop unveiled a seasonal campaign for the Vancouver Aquarium yesterday that's based on a concept most of us talk about at this time of year, but few do anything about: excessive spending on trivia.

"Give the Gift," which is Taxi's first campaign for the aquarium, is based on the insight that the holiday season often represents excessive materialism. "There's no doubt kids get spoiled at Christmas," explains CD Michael Mayes. "There's also no doubt parents get overwhelmed with everything that's going on. This was the perfect message for the campaign: take your kids somewhere they'll be entertained and educated. And while you're at it, take a break from all the commercialism."

The integrated initiative - with media buys handled by Vancouver-based Taylor Made Media - will run until early January. It makes a lighthearted comparison between children's passing interest in new toys versus the unique experience of being up close to ocean life at the aquarium. One poster execution shows a young girl who has discarded her new toy to watch Beluga whales. Another depicts a boy pressed up against a glass tank, mesmerized by a giant, prehistoric-looking Amazon fish while his gaming system lies forgotten on the floor.

Five radio spots compare visiting the aquarium with some other less-than-relaxing holiday experiences, such as fighting over toys while shopping or getting stuck in traffic en route to Whistler. Other executions appear at the aquarium: posters remind visitors that aquarium visits can be great gifts with copy such as, "Give the gift of blubber," and "Piranhas make perfect stocking stuffers."

Aiming to reach people as they are they are bombarded with traditional commercial holiday messages, the campaign's goal is to bring more visitors to the aquarium, help drive sales and increase memberships over the holiday period.

-By Terry Poulton