

## T-Shirt-Based Interactive Marketing: New from Apparel Media Group

*Platform Matches Brands with Target Demographic Groups to Drive Engagement*

CHICAGO (December 1, 2009) — The shirt on your back has long been used as an advertising billboard, but Chicago-based [Apparel Media Group](#) (AMG) is now turning it into an engagement marketing platform that creates an emotional bond with consumers by combining demographic targeting, group sponsorships and SMS/URL interactivity. The company matches brands with groups such as college organizations, youth sports leagues and young mothers looking for sponsors to cut the costs of custom apparel. The brand receives premium real estate on the shirt to publicize its service or product, and the buyer grateful for the price break becomes a brand ambassador.

Brands can also include an SMS code or unique URL inviting consumers to send text messages to receive special offers or visit a campaign website, enabling t-shirts to serve as interactive mobile marketing vehicles with potential viral reach. A proprietary analytics program tracks campaign success on an individual basis as well as by geography and campaign-wide, including estimated campaign impression rates, cost per thousand impressions (CPM), and impact on the brand's website traffic.

Benefits of AMG's Interactive Apparel Advertising program include:

- **Brand visibility** with t-shirt wearers as roving brand advocates.
- **Interactive brand engagement** via SMS/URL placement on t-shirts.
- **Goodwill/emotional connection** created by subsidizing custom apparel costs.
- **Targeting to relevant demographics** through AMG's patent-pending matching program.
- **ROI measurement** with proprietary linked feedback tracking system.

“Custom t-shirts are inherently interactive because consumers are wearing the brand. We're using t-shirts not only as a canvas for brand messaging but as a platform for driving meaningful brand relationships - both by instilling a sense of loyalty to a brand or product and by adding interactive technology to deepen the connection,” said co-CEO Amish Tolia, who founded the company with fellow Indiana University graduate Jared Golden and IU Kelley School of Business professor Gerry Hays. “It's a fresh approach to reaching a consumer audience that increasingly tends to ignore direct brand appeals like online banner ads.”

### **Launching with College Market**

Initially, AMG is offering test programs to brands interested in tapping into the college market, leveraging the established campus relationships of AMG member company [Campus Threadz](#) that was founded by Tolia and Golden four years ago. Brands can place messaging on custom garments purchased by campus organizations in return for contributions from their advertising budget that lower the group's price per unit.

Through Campus Threadz, AMG currently can help brands reach more than 750,000 consumers aged 18 to 24 on more than 30 college campuses, including those affiliated with nearly 50 fraternities and sororities for which Campus Threadz has mark licenses. The company continues to expand to other educational institutions and also has campus media coordinators who provide feedback to sponsoring brands based on user surveys.

The AMG roadmap includes expansion to other highly desirable demographics as well. The next targets are youth sports leagues (League Threadz), which will enable major national brands to reach community teams on a grassroots level, and young mothers (Baby Threadz), who will be asked to sign up for marketing programs with AMG's brand partners in exchange for free or discounted children's clothing.

### **Proven Need**

Tolia and Golden's experience running Campus Threadz provided keen insights into the need of student organizations to lower the cost of their custom apparel.

"Our customers frequently asked us to find sponsorships. We told them we would print a sponsor's logo but we didn't recruit them," Golden said. "After months of research and strategic planning, the three of us realized we could parlay that customer request into an interactive advertising platform that would help brands reach and cultivate key consumer audiences. With the right business model, we realized that custom apparel can be the way to the consumer's heart."

Tolia and Golden left jobs on Wall Street – Tolia with HSBC and Golden with Deutsche Bank – to develop the business plan and launch the company with Hays. They have signed their first brand partner, a digital marketing agency that is using the AMG platform for clients that want to reach the college student demographic, and have others in the pipeline.

For more information, visit [www.apparelmediagroup.com](http://www.apparelmediagroup.com).

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