

advertising case study



mylamesexlife.com

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Background

Granger Community Church, a church with more than 5,000 in weekly attendance located in Granger, Indiana has a unique vision and uses the arts, media and culturally relevant teaching to reach its target, the unchurched — specifically men ages 35-54. It was founded in 1986 by Dr. Mark Beeson and his wife, Sheila. Granger was recently identified by *Outreach Magazine* as one of the top 100 fastest growing churches of the 21st century.

Campaign

Granger Community Church recently launched a local outdoor advertising campaign that featured a photo of a couple's feet entwined under bed covers and the Web address *mylamesexlife.com*. Curious onlookers who visited *mylamesexlife.com* would view a flash movie asking questions that commonly surround the topic of sex. At the end of the movie, viewers were automatically re-directed to *GCCwired.com* to learn more about the upcoming weekend series called PureSex. The PureSex series (5 weekend services at Granger) asked questions to unravel the myths and confusion about sex. The messages, medias and music helped communicate that sex wasn't invented in a dark alley behind a porn shop — that it's part of God's design. And in fact, God wants you to have great sex.



Four poster panel outdoor boards were purchased in a 3 mile radius surrounding the church (12 GRPs, 32,244 impressions). The ads ran for four weeks. All had the same creative with only the web address *mylamesexlife.com*.

While direct mail postcards were developed, using the same creative and mailed to 35,000 people, the web address *mylamesexlife.com* was only promoted on the outdoor boards.

Rationale

Granger intentionally omitted the church name on the boards to encourage people to log onto *mylamesexlife.com* and to engage in conversation about sex. Granger has found that over 80% of people that attend a weekend service for the first time, attend because they were invited by a friend. So, the intent with these outdoor boards was to get the community talking, to engage people in conversation and to make it easy for people to invite their friends to a weekend service.

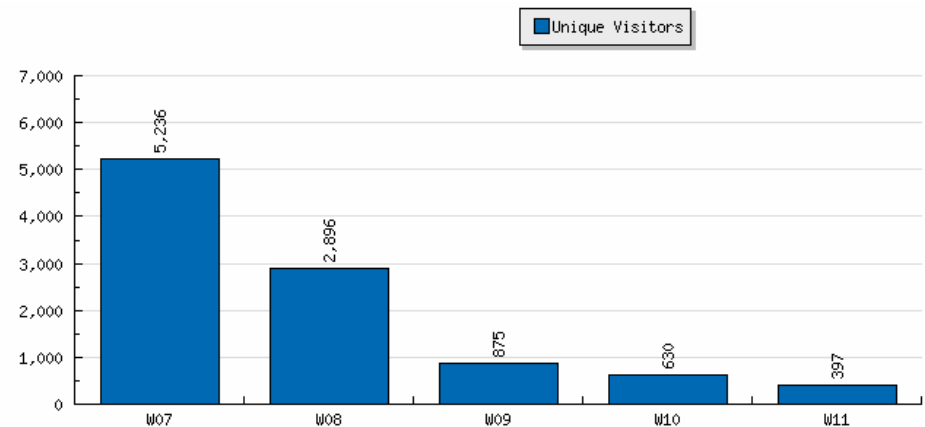
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Results

The first week the billboards were posted, the *mylamesexlife.com* site received over 5,000 unique visits. The second week, almost 3,000 with a total of 9,637 visits.

Traffic on *GCCwired.com* increased as well. The site received about 200% more traffic than normal weeks.

Attendance at opening weekend of the series, was 7,300. This is a 70.7% increase from the same weekend last year. Until this series, Granger had never been over 6,000 people in attendance for a non-holiday weekend. During the series, over 6,000 people attended every weekend. The average for all five weeks was 6,702.



Added Exposure

As a result of the outdoor campaign, local and national media picked up the story. Media coverage is outlined below.

- All local TV networks (WSJV, WNDU, WSBT) aired the story within a day of the boards being posted. Most of the TV networks did a follow up story.
- The local paper (*South Bend Tribune*) ran two articles.
- Local radio—WBYT discussed the boards in their morning show.
- By the end of the same week, Fox National News (Fox & Friends Saturday, Fox & Friends Sunday and Dayside) picked up the story with live interviews with Senior Pastor, Mark Beeson.
- Live interview with Beeson on the Mancow radio show.
- The blogging community engaged in conversation about *mylamesexlife.com* — over 98 posts were made regarding the site. (*Technorati, April 2006*)

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Feedback

The church received numerous amounts of feedback from residents in the community. There was some negative feedback, but overall the response was very positive. Granger was intentional and even hopeful that this campaign would generate some controversy in order to raise awareness about this topic in the community and offer a biblical perspective. Granger received approximately 160 comments/feedbacks via phone, email, web site regarding the campaign. Approximately 60% of the comments were negative...but it appears that a majority of these comments came from people who are already currently attending church. And based on the attendance during the series, the target audience that the church is trying to reach was receptive and interested in the message that Granger had to offer about PureSex.

Sample negative comments:

"I cannot speak to your motive, but your advertising campaign about sex is disgraceful. Sex sells and now you are selling sex for your church. Christ does not need sexual provocative messages to tell His Holy Word. Have you ever heard that God is Holy?"

"It now appears that in addition to Victoria's Secret and countless other billboard ads loaded with sex, I now have to shield my children from church signs in order to keep their innocence intact. I am outraged that a Christian Church is putting signs up like this, so my 9-year-old can ask me, 'Mama, what's a sex life?' Some churches are more than lukewarm people pleasers. They're a menace to common decency. I remember clearly what the Word of God says about those who cause little ones to stumble. I tremble for these hirelings posing as shepards."

Sample positive comments:

"I just wanted to say that I heard about your billboards and the negative feedback that you are receiving in the local media. I hardly find what is on your billboard offensive compared to many I have seen in recent months. The women who complained needs to step back and look at what her children see at home on TV, or in a magazine or during a movie. I applaud your church for taking a step in that direction that many aren't willing to go in! I have five children of my own, and if they saw your billboard they may ask questions, but I would rather them ask me than someone else. So, I am one citizen of the community who thinks your sign should stay!"

"There has been a lot of talk about the new billboards in the area. I'm happy to say, most of what I heard has been great. Good for Granger for causing people to talk and parents to talk to their children!"

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WiredChurches.com

'When there is buzz in the community about what's happening at your church,
curious people will visit.'

— *Simply Strategic Growth*, Tim Stevens & Tony Morgan