

**INQUIRY INTO STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ALCOHOL
ABUSE AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE IN NSW**

Name: UntoXicated

Date received: 27/02/2013

BORN IN PUNK

Untoxicated

CHEMICAL-FREE LIVING

DON'T FOLLOW THE CROWD



**DRUG-FREE
AND PROUD**

IT'S OK NOT TO DRINK ALCOHOL,
SMOKE OR DO DRUGS

XXX

STRAIGHT EDGE - SINCE 1980

NON-ALCOHOLIC



UNTOXICATED.COM



WHAT IS UNTOXICATED?

UntoXicated was created as a reaction to the staggering statistics of drug and alcohol abuse, suicide (both youth and adult), domestic violence, homelessness and other related issues.

Here is our non-denominational mission:

“UntoXicated is a lifestyle brand and a community that empowers those who say no to tobacco, alcohol and drugs. We support those who believe in our lifestyle by offering them identity and inclusion.”

UntoXicated is based on the principles developed by the "Straight Edge" subculture that was born within the punk era in the early eighties. We have history! This aspect alone is guaranteed to get media attention.

UntoXicated is also visually dynamic and thought provoking - we get noticed!

Within all communities, there are people who live by alcohol tobacco and drug-free principles **and are proud of their choice**. There are a few sports and entertainment stars that also embrace these ideals. Many though, are unsung role models within our communities. We'd like to change that by supporting them and helping them promote the values they believe in.

Our message is that you don't need to drink, smoke or do drugs just to be accepted socially. However, we'd also like to take this one step further by saying...

“If you don't do tobacco, alcohol or drugs YOU ARE COOL!”

Our approach can be summed up in a quote taken from one of our free Facebook Timeline pictures that our visitors use on their own Facebook profile:



This quote received 111 Likes, 21 Comments and 18 Shares within days of being posted on Facebook wall.

Teenage years are the time for many to transition into tobacco, alcohol and drug taking. They are actively searching for an identity at this time in their lives. Social pressure and marketing inflicts a dramatic toll on youth. Yet there are few marketing campaigns that actively promote abstinence as being cool or a trend to follow, until now...

The UntoXicated point of difference is that we promote clean living; abstinence from tobacco, alcohol and drugs in a desirable and “edgy” way.

Our message is not exclusively relevant to youth. It includes all ages, cultures and religious denominations. Within months we have gained a large Facebook following from all over the world - from Muslim Malaysia to across the Bible belt of the USA.

We currently have more than 3600 Facebook Fans and are growing daily!



A BRIEF HISTORY ON STRAIGHT EDGE...

In the late 70's and early 80's a group of punk bands and kids began something that grew into a movement. It was a reaction to the self-destruction, the self-hatred, the pain and suffering caused by the punk mentality.

In Washington, D.C., a common practice at all-ages punk shows was to mark minors with an "X" on the back of their hands so they couldn't buy alcohol. "Straight Edge" kids took this symbol that was originally used to identify them as being too young to drink, and made it their own. Those above legal drinking age and who didn't drink for ideological reasons also started to mark themselves with an X as a show of solidarity.

Their basic beliefs were that drugs and alcohol are not needed and should be rejected. That one should live against the grain of popular society and live by rules and standards made by them and not the ones dictated by society.



The Straight Edge movement or lifestyle became one of the few youth subcultures to actively discourage drinking, smoking and drug taking.

Straight Edge has continued to evolve and expand globally. Our strong, supportive community on Facebook is comprised from individuals that live the Straight Edge lifestyle of all ages from all around the world.

UntoXicated uses elements from the Straight Edge “movement” and re-brands it to make it more accessible and more appealing to a wider community.

HOW UNTOXICATED CONNECTS

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/untoxicated

The UntoXicated Facebook Fan Page has been the major focus of our efforts. Within six months and a minimal advertising budget, I have built a strong supportive community of over 3600 fans.

“The UntoXicated Facebook community is unique as it supports others who live a drug-free lifestyle.”

We have created a safe environment that gives fans a sense of belonging in a community with others who have the same values.

A large part of our aim on our Facebook page is to dispel myths associated with Straight Edge living.



We often ask questions from our fans including:

- Do you need to be in a gang to be Straight Edge?
- Why are you living a drug free life?
- Where in the world are you?

We’ve received hundreds of responses to these questions with feedback and encouragement from others.

We have shown my audience, that you can be any age, race or nationality to live drug-free and claim to live a Straight Edge lifestyle. These questions have helped form the backbone of the UntoXicated community.

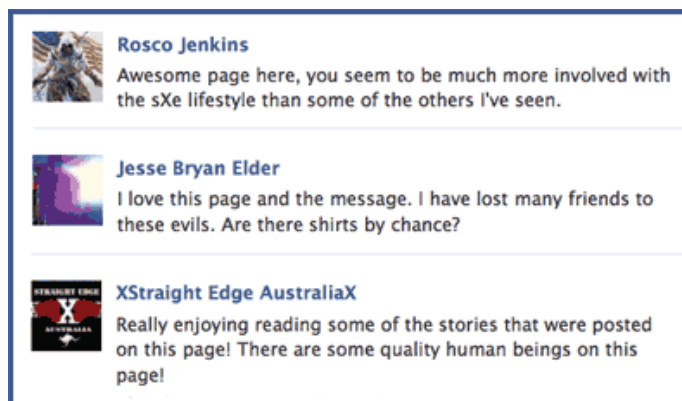
There are other Straight Edge Facebook pages online, but their focus usually focused on the hardcore / punk music scene. Although we acknowledge our roots came from this scene, we don’t actively promote it.

UntoXicated caters to a large community of different backgrounds with a broad social demographic.

“Our 3600th fan was a female from Iraq!”

We engage our fans with trivia competitions and have active discussions on how, where and why people become Straight Edge.

There are Facebook posts from people of all ages and backgrounds sharing personal stories about their conviction to stay drug free. These generate hundreds of comments of encouragement and support.



We have a large selection of Facebook Profile and Timeline pictures for fans to “brand” themselves online. These images are extremely popular.

Many of our Facebook Fans brand identify themselves with our imagery and use our images (right) on their own personal profile picture.

These images have all been made “print-ready” artwork and are ready for eventual commercial t-shirt print runs.



Skype and Video [Click here for the video.](#)

By asking questions relevant to those who live a drug-free life, we’ve generated a lot of discussion on our page.

We took this approach one step further and conducted live Skype interviews with participants from around the world. We post these video interviews on the page. This generates even more interactivity with the Facebook community. We also create video content by randomly selecting and highlight posts on our page. These videos can be words of wisdom or personal stories shared by fans of our page.



THE UNTOXICATED WEBSITE untoxicated.com

The main feature of the UntoXicated website is it’s “pledge” function. Visitors who take a pledge and commit to not drink, smoke or do drugs are rewarded with a free downloadable poster and certificate.

This feature was installed upon consultation with leading social marketers. **We now have a way of measuring our positive social change.**

Our database is made up of around 600 names and email addresses. We have now built a similar function on our Facebook site.

Following the overwhelming interaction from both the website and Facebook, we have made a built-in shopping cart facility for merchandise. We currently sell pendants that are worn with pride by members of our community.



OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA

We have accounts on Youtube, Twitter and Pinterest. One primary focus is on video content hosted on Youtube with backlinks to Facebook.

MERCHANDISE

There is enormous potential for jewellery, badges, stickers, skateboard decks and other merchandise with UntoXicated designs. As you can see below, our Facebook fans tell us what they want!

On this page are just some of our ideas that we think will be popular. Nothing is in production yet, but we're ready to go!

We have differentiated ourselves from the usual rebellious teen clothing (skulls, marijuana leaves and drinking slogans!). UntoXicated designs are bold and uncompromising. The wearers of our clothing are proud of their drug-free choice.

It's no coincidence that some of our designs look suspiciously like beer labels or tattoo artwork. We want individuals to feel proud of their drug-free stance - not promote another alcoholic beverage!



Surfboards



Skateboards



THE UNTOXICATED FUTURE

We would like to align UntoXicated with drug and alcohol prevention organizations in Australia and abroad to help us spread our message. We believe we have the marketing angle covered; we just need a hand with resources and funding.

Through our Facebook Page, we receive requests from Australia and around the world, from people wanting to help spread the UntoXicated message. Some of these have been from youth workers in the UK to anti-drug campaigns in Malaysia, to individuals who want to make a stance in their crime-ridden neighborhoods. UntoXicated at the moment, does not have the resources to fulfill these requirements.

There's a need for the UntoXicated message around the globe, but of course it must first start in our own backyard.

Here's a glimpse of what could be next...



1. The UntoXicated.com website becomes a major portal with advice and support for those choosing our drug-free lifestyle.

The website is already engaging our audience with its pledge functionality and merchandise section. However, we'd like to take our community one step further, because as we have found out...

there is a great desire for members of our community to feel like they belong somewhere!

Here are just a few ideas for it that will further engage our community on our website:

- News and events
- Educational resources
- Help contacts
- Discussion forum
- Competitions
- Volunteering opportunities
- Party sober "non-drinking" games section
- How to host a sober party section

We are often getting requests for new merchandise. A range of low cost items, from stickers to rubber wristbands, badges, stick on tattoos could be available to the teen market. More expensive promotional items; from t-shirts to skateboard decks are often requested by our Facebook Fans as well.



2. "Sober parties" will spread the message that it's ok to party - without a drink in your hand!

New! As seen on the internet... **sober parties are the new social phenomenon.** Instead of socializing with the support of alcohol, why not use creative "non-drinking" games instead?! These parties have shown that it's easy to gain the support from the wider community. Take-away food outlets (such as Subway and Pizza Hut) are always keen to donate and sponsor these events and to be seen as promoting social good!

It makes sense to ramp the sober party theory up a notch and potentially have events such as **UntoXicated music festivals**. There's a lot of teens out there that like the idea of seeing their favourite band perform live, however, because they are too young to drink (!) they won't be allowed entry! Why not change this?



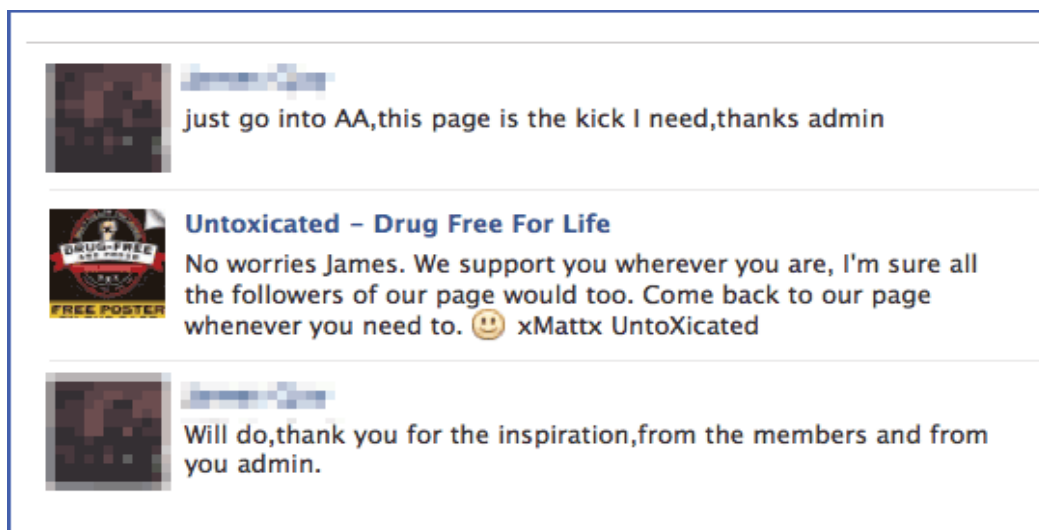
3. Taking the “Straight Edge Pledge” to the crowd!

Wherever youth are gathered, like surf, skate, music and sports festivals, we could have resources where participants could take the “Straight Edge Pledge!” Information could be collected on iPads at venues.



And finally...

Just two stories from hundreds of lives we have touched in our Facebook community in such a short time. The first is a personal message to admin. The second image also shows a glimpse at the support our community provides and how many people “Like” contributor comments (148 in this example).



WHO IS UNTOXICATED?

Our message is a little different to most prevention campaigns. Our focus is on supporting and honoring those who have made the choice to live a drug-free life. It's not a complete solution to the drug and alcohol problem, but we believe that by shining a light on positive role models, we can show that drug-free living is very achievable. In a way, our focus is on rewarding positive actions, which sometimes can be more effective than telling individuals, especially teens, what not to do.

Matt Urmenyhazi **Facebook alias: xDredgex**

UntoXicated was founded by Matt Urmenyhazi. Matt is a proud father of two, with a 21-year-old son and a 17-year-old daughter. He has also been an active youth leader for 12 years with the Scouts Association of Australia.

With a 25 year background in broadcast television graphics, including Foxspots, MTV and FuelTV, he has both a strong background in digital design and internet marketing.

Matt admits he is an 18 year old trapped inside the body of a 48-year-old man, and he has a chronic binge-thinking problem. He is also Straight Edge and proud of it!

**Matt gives talks to schools and youth groups
about the Straight Edge message.**



Vicki Bobotis **Facebook alias: xVeebeex**

Bobotis is the production coordinator of UntoXicated.

With a strong background in television, Vicki has worked as a producer for many years at MTV and Arena Television. She films, edits and directs, and now uses her own video production company to help promote UntoXicated.

Vicki left her television career to use her powers with video for good - not evil!

Vicki is Straight Edge and proud of it too!

