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Client : Sing-Gium International

Medium : Media

Date : September 9, 2005

Headline : Myth War crafts viral blitz for game rollout

Page : 12

media 09.09.05

Myth War crafts viral blitz for game rollout

By Jaimie Seaton

SOUTHEAST ASIA: The region's gaming players are stepping up their focus on unconventional marketing strategies to accompany the rollout of two new massive multi-player online role-playing games.

Singapore's Sing-Gium Sing-Gium International is focusing its efforts on online and viral marketing, as it launches the beta version of *Myth War*. Meanwhile, the Philippines' largest online game publisher, Level Up, has appointed Arc Worldwide to develop a communications strategy that includes CRM, interactive, promotional and shopper marketing, and PR, for *Rising Force*.

The launches come amid continuing media coverage of the perils of online gaming addiction, along with Government crackdowns on the games in China. *Myth War*, which will graduate to a fully paid version in October, is looking to sidestep the negative publicity, shunning traditional advertising to reach young men between the ages



Myth War...shunning traditional advertising to reach a cynical target

of 15 and 34, who are often cynical about overt marketing.

"Viral marketing through game forums, word-of-mouth and newsletters is essential," said Jeffery Tan, executive manager of Sing-Gium. "We will seek out well-respected gamers to get the word out through 'thought leaders'."

The company sponsors the

website Focusplay, a game community for hardcore gamers which is run by opinion leaders among local gamers. In return for the sponsorship, the leaders test the games, give feedback and recruit fellow gamers to do more testing.

Online advertising is running at Gamers Hell, and is aimed at surfers from Europe

in an effort to increase traffic from the region. The company is also producing digital content such as mobile phone themes and wallpapers, PC desktop wallpapers and ring tones based on *Myth War*, distributing to mobile phone content and game portals. In addition, the company is planning a comic book series based on the game's storyline and a book written by popular Taiwanese novelist, Jonny Lau. This is the first effort of its kind for Sing-Gium, which hopes to have both in major book and comic stores by next year.

Level Up, meanwhile, selected Arc following a three-way pitch against Tequila and Proximity, an Arc representative disclosed. Arc Philippines managing director Ichay Bulaong said the campaign would target hardcore gamers, using guerilla and ambient tactics to bring the online story to life. "We demonstrated our expertise in the development of cutting-edge creative to the client via a pre-pitch SMS and email/MPEG," said Bulaong. *Additional reporting by Arun Sudhaman*