

Levi Strauss & Co. Case Study

Leading a Comprehensive Business Response to HIV/AIDS in South Africa

HIV/AIDS is by far the most pressing public health concern in South Africa. In this environment, a truly proactive business approach requires much more than just addressing the issue within the four walls of the workplace. Our unique “end-to-end” strategy reaches critical stakeholders from office employees, to factory workers, to consumers. As a result, we are better able to maintain a healthy and productive workforce, disseminate best practices for reaching youth with life-saving messaging and information, and advance the HIV/AIDS dialogue across the nation.

Within our own workplace, 2008 saw the launch of the LS&Co. HIV/AIDS Prevention Treatment and Care Program. We provided innovative and interactive in-person prevention education and offered free voluntary and confidential HIV testing for all employees, as well as free HIV/AIDS treatment and care for employees and dependents in need. From office to retail to factory employees, LS&Co. is ensuring access to life-saving information, testing and care for our workforce in South Africa.

Beyond our own business, we are using the power of our brand, our retail footprint and strategic cause marketing to reach South African consumers with critical information through a program called Red for Life. Red for Life stresses the importance of HIV testing, prevention and education among South African youth. Key components of the program include mobile testing facilities that provide testing at locations frequented by young people, including Levi's® stores and university campuses. People who test positive are provided up to four months of counseling and service referrals.

Rage for the Revolution, Red for Life's signature concert series, offers concert tickets to young people who get tested for HIV, allowing them to see the country's most popular music stars, many of whom also get tested publicly and appear in Levi's®-branded public service announcements. To date the campaign has tested more than 90,000 young people and given away more than one million branded condoms. The Levi's® brand in South Africa is visibly and meaningfully addressing a problem that more than 75 percent of young people say is important to them. At the same time, our brand is No. 1 in South Africa and we have been experiencing strong year-over-year sales growth in that country without significant dollars devoted to traditional advertising.

Our approach to HIV/AIDS in South Africa demonstrates that sustained commitment to global corporate citizenship makes a difference – for our employees, for the communities where we live and work, and for our business.