

## TV T-shirts

By Donna De Marco

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Adam Hollander has a clear picture of what marketers need. The 30-year-old Bethesda native has put a twist on the TV-wearing Teletubbies and has created a walking, talking billboard.

A tech-savvy T-shirt, worn by "brand ambassadors," is embedded with an 11-inch flat-screen with a surround-sound system that plays a marketer's message.

Mr. Hollander, creative director for Brand Marketers in San Francisco, is keeping information about the inner workings of the high-tech gizmo close to his chest — for competitive reasons, of course.

The 5.5-pound T-shirt is just another gimmick in the never-ending fight to stand out from the thousands of messages bombarding consumers every day.

In the past several years, marketers have put flat-screen technology into focus — using it to reach audiences in unsuspecting places and off-the-wall ways.

"Engaging consumers with technology is an effective way to reach consumers," said Brad Nierenberg, president of Momentum Marketing, an event-marketing firm in Alexandria. "You have to be innovative to break through the clutter."

Movie studio 20th Century Fox saw the potential of the shirts and put them to use to promote "I, Robot," starring Will Smith. Last month the T-shirts were worn in 40 to 50 locations in 10 cities, including the District.

"Because it's something innovative and different, people want to check it out," said Jeffrey Godsick, executive vice president of marketing for 20th Century Fox. "It really drew people in."

The studio is considering using the shirts for future promotions, including for "Taxi." The movie, starring Queen Latifah and Jimmy Fallon, opens in the fall.

"We are always on the lookout to find uncluttered environments and innovative ways to stand out," Mr. Godsick said.

Mr. Hollander says he has several other potential clients and is working on a project to use the shirts to get young people to register to vote.

Brand Marketers has proposed to California officials the idea of sending brand ambassadors to urban communities to get people to register to vote.

Mr. Hollander is so passionate about his creation and what it can do that he says his company will pay for the register-to-vote project, even if the government won't.

"This is such an extremely powerful medium," said Mr. Hollander, who won't disclose the cost of the T-shirts. "Young people are so used to TV. It has to be on TV for them to relate to it."

Other marketing firms also understand the power of the screen.

Momentum Marketing uses flat-screen technology at promotional events for clients such as Kia Motors and America Online. The interactive promotion engages consumers, allows data to be collected and gives the brand an opportunity for future marketing.

"Our goal is to get consumers to listen to our brand," Mr. Nierenberg said. "If consumers see something in a new way, they give it a second look."

