

venmo

Case Study
Lucas uses Venmo

June 2014

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The background image is a subway station platform. Several green pillars are visible, each with a Venmo advertisement featuring a man in a red shirt and a Santa hat. The text on the pillars includes "LUCAS works HARD", "Bedford Avenue", "LUCAS knows TIME", "venmo", and "LUCAS pays RENT". A black sign with a white arrow points up towards an "Exit Driggs Av & North 7 St". In the foreground, two women are sitting on a wooden bench, looking down at their phones. The overall scene is dimly lit, typical of a subway station.

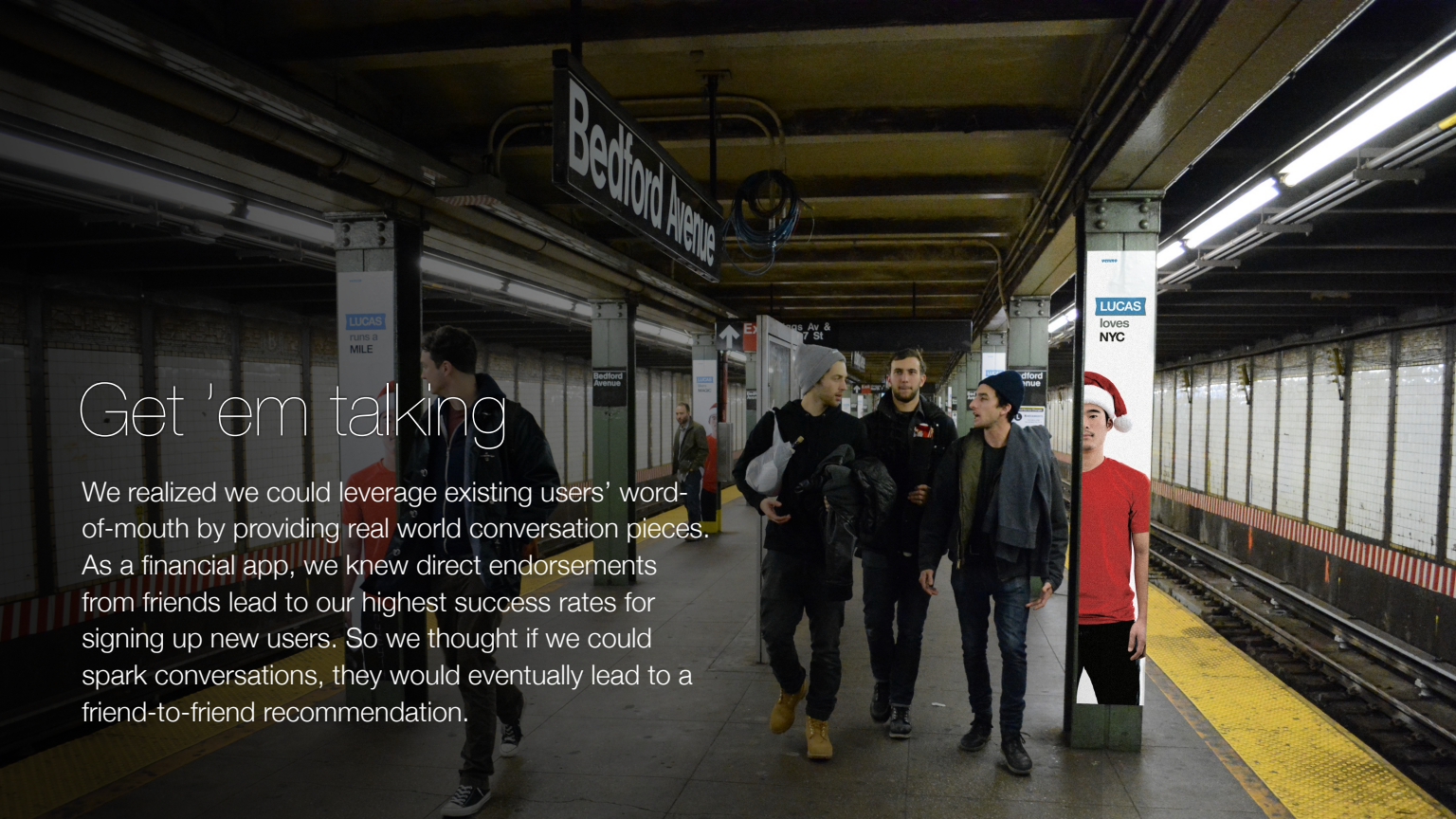
Advertising Social

As an app developer, Venmo had grown its loyal user base exclusively via fantastic word-of-mouth. We needed our foray into advertising to capture the spirit of our unique product—social payments.

We challenged I3X, our internal creative team, to develop a campaign that would break through typical transit ads and get our message across.

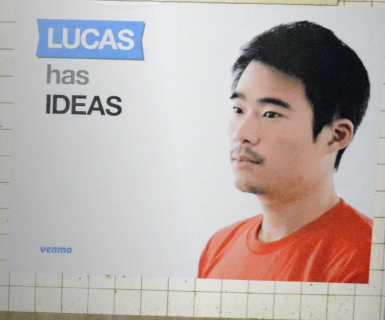
Get 'em talking

We realized we could leverage existing users' word-of-mouth by providing real world conversation pieces. As a financial app, we knew direct endorsements from friends lead to our highest success rates for signing up new users. So we thought if we could spark conversations, they would eventually lead to a friend-to-friend recommendation.



Soup cans to selfies

We developed creative that features Lucas, a Venmo employee, doing everyday things. It was a modern twist on pop art—instead of soup cans, we were elevating the social media norms of selfies and short sentences. Instead of advertising a product, we used the creative to reflect these rapidly trending cultural movements.





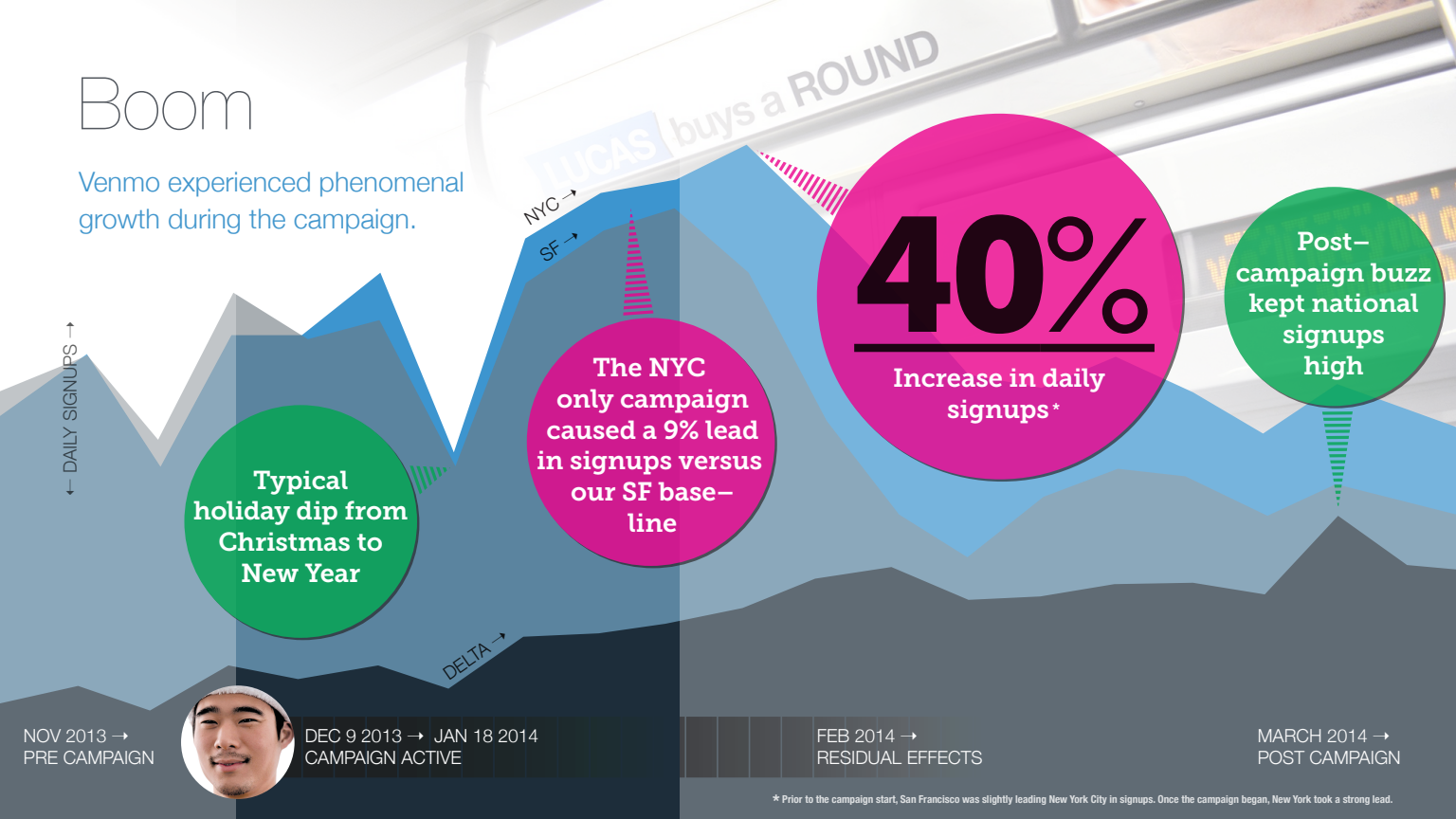
↑ Exit Driggs Av &
North 7 St

Bedford
Avenue

The Epicenter

We began with Bedford Station in Williamsburg, a cultural epicenter in NYC. We used each placement within the station to highlight different angles of Lucas's millennial life—transforming the space into a real world online-esque experience. We took subject matter usually reserved for a user's singular focus on a computer screen, and moved it to the station and subway cars. Lucas could not, and would not be ignored.

Venmo experienced phenomenal growth during the campaign.



Unprovoked, fans of “Venmo Lucas” made him their own, generating thousands of variations.*

Quora

What Is The Concept For The “Lucas” Venmo Campaign?

- 4 ANSWERS
- 10,073 VIEWS
- 34 FOLLOWERS ON THIS QUESTION

craigslist

Missed Connections:
Bedford L Platform
(cross posted on Yahoo News)
52 - 114K VIEWS (ESTIMATED)



Venmo Subway Ad Generator
(cross posted on Reddit)

- 13,757 VISITS
- 11,615 UNIQUE VISITORS
- 35,166 PAGEVIEWS
- 7,994 VARIATIONS GENERATED
- 83 REDDIT UPVOTES
- 30 REDDIT COMMENTS



I Made This For My
Son's Birthday
15,594 VIEWS - IMGUR
612 POINTS - REDDIT
776 UPVOTES
DOWNVOTES

tumblr.

Lucas Knows What You Did
265,832 NOTES

JAN
26

JAN
28

FEB
19

MAR
28

DEC
26



DEC 9 2013 → JAN 18 2014
CAMPAIGN ACTIVE

FEB 2014 →
RESIDUAL EFFECTS

MARCH 2014 →
POST CAMPAIGN

* Shown is a sampling of variations or discussions the ads. There were hundreds of similar discussions and variations on sites like Tumblr and Reddit.

← DAILY SIGNUPS →

Gauged by search volume, interest in the campaign was directly proportional to increased interest in Venmo.



We earned national press—

VALLEYWAG

Venmo: Everyone Hates Your Weirdo Subway Ads

👁 59,105 VIEWS
💬 118 COMMENTS

BuzzFeed

14 Rejected 'Lucas Uses Venmo Ads'
👁 39,152 VIEWS

FOX NEWS

What's Up With the 'Lucas Uses Venmo' Ads?
👍 26 SHARES
👍 177 LIKES
🐦 81

BUSINESS INSIDER

10 Financial Innovations More Exciting than Bitcoin
👁 18,435 VIEWS

YAHOO!

Rumor Roundup: Katy Perry Wins Twitter and Somebody Likes Venmo Lucas
👁 52 - 140K VIEWS (ESTIMATED)

FAST COMPANY

Lucas Talks to Fast Company
👍 3.2K
🐦 433

The New York Times*

Consumers Are Still Seeing Seams in the Mobile Wallet
👁 50 - 100K VIEWS (ESTIMATED)

↑ DAILY SIGNUPS →



DEC 9 2013 → JAN 18 2014
CAMPAIGN ACTIVE

FEB 2014 →
RESIDUAL EFFECTS

MARCH 2014 →
POST CAMPAIGN

* New York Times online and print editions full length article featuring Venmo. Both editions featured photographs of the subway ads.

further fueling online social activity—

Online
conversation=
social media,
blogs & forums

166%

Increase in online
conversation*

NOV 2013 →
PRE CAMPAIGN



DEC 9 2013 → JAN 18 2014
CAMPAIGN ACTIVE

FEBRUARY 2014 →
RESIDUAL EFFECTS

MARCH 2014 →
POST CAMPAIGN

* Aggregate based on Venmo related posts and images on Tumblr, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, personal blogs and forums.

and taking our regional campaign
to millions of eyes.

← ■ REACH (0 - 10M) →

← ■ NO. OF TWEETS (0 - 2K) →

5.1K%

Increase in reach*

2.3K%
increase
in tweets

REACH (TOTAL NUMBER OF POSTERS' FOLLOWERS) →

NUMBER OF TWEETS →

DELTA "VENMO" AND "LUCAS+VENMO" (0-30M) →

NOV 2013 →
PRE CAMPAIGN



DEC 9 2013 → JAN 18 2014
CAMPAIGN ACTIVE

FEB 2014 →
RESIDUAL EFFECTS

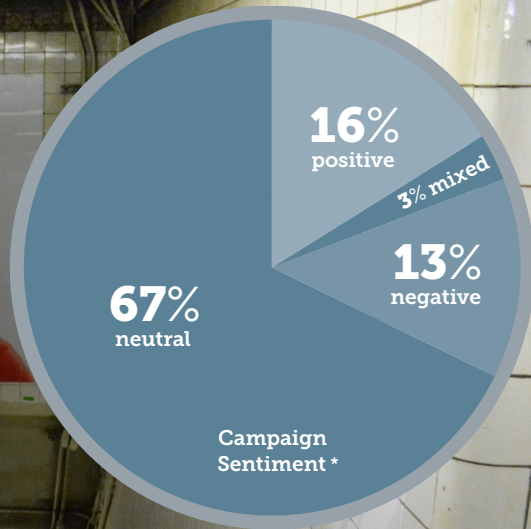
MARCH 2014 →
POST CAMPAIGN

* Measured by multiplying individual tweets by that user's number of followers.

Manhattan &
Rockaway Parkway

LUCAS
takes the
STAIRS

venmo



As with most attention-drawing creative, our campaign had many vocal detractors. We measured Venmo's reputation online and found conversations—even those beginning with criticism of the ads—were positive for the brand overall, always ending in raving product recommendations.



lauren drell
@dreilly

TWEETS
9,677

FOLLOWING
1,924

FOLLOWERS
11K

love venmo, love this campaign. RT
[@ARos13_](#): Lucas uses Venmo. He also pays
rent, likes magic, buys rounds and loves NYC.

* Calculated by scoring 6248 Twitter threads based on language choices and tone.

Here's a look at the campaign's long tail effect on Venmo's monthly transaction volume.

128%

More transaction volume *

**\$140
million
per month**

← TRANSACTIONS VOLUME →



DEC 9 2013 → JAN 18 2014
CAMPAIGN ACTIVE

FEB 2014 →
RESIDUAL EFFECTS

MARCH 2014 →
POST CAMPAIGN

* Increase in monthly transaction volume from November 2013 to March 2014.

"Lucas uses Venmo"

Campaign by I3X

Iqram Magdon-Ismail – founder

Kortina – founder

Neil Shah – creative director

Robin Spencer – production artist

Sandra Rubinchik – copywriter

Shira Brettman – media buyer

Starring

Lucas Chi – software engineer

Case study data & metrics

Annie Corbett & Andy Enkeboll

Thank you.

LUCAS buys a ROUND

LUCAS uses
venmo

