

## Sprout Engagement Case Study: Afro Samurai



NAMCO BANDAI Games America Inc. is a leading interactive entertainment software publisher and developer based in Santa Clara, CA. The company is a part of the NAMCO BANDAI group of companies known for creating and publishing many of the industry's top video game franchises including the PAC-MAN®, SOULCALIBUR®, NARUTO™ and Tekken® brands.

This January, Namco Bandai Games released the high-style action game Afro Samurai®. Based on the hit animation series, Afro Samurai is a cutting-edge interactive adventure that delivers an immersive, unique game experience to players. The game, available for Xbox 360® video game and entertainment system from Microsoft and PLAYSTATION®3 computer entertainment system, blends modern hip-hop and technology with traditional Japanese culture into a brutally fresh cinematic experience.

To support the launch of the game, NAMCO BANDAI Games America turned to Sprout to help create an engagement campaign that would allow fans to get a feel for the great hip-hop soundtrack, unique art style and game experience. "We turned to Sprout because of its ability to immerse users in an interactive experience that is representative of the Afro Samurai hip-hop adventure," said Ryan Grissom, Senior Manager, Interactive at NAMCO BANDAI Games America. The Sprout solution allows users to quickly experience the incredible artwork, story and hip-hop soundtrack.

Most importantly, it's engaging and memorable, allowing users to become a part of the game by "Afro-ing" themselves via a picture upload or the Web-cam component." Ryan adds.

Sprout delivered the Afro Yourself Campaign to NAMCO BANDAI Games in less than a week. "When I look at the functionality of the campaign, I am amazed that Sprout was able to take our assets and deliver the fully-functional campaign in less than a week," Ryan says. "That's the benefit of working with experts in social media who have an established technology platform. There's no way this campaign could have been developed internally in that time frame."

The campaign is featured on the official web site of the video game, [www.bloodisbeautiful.com](http://www.bloodisbeautiful.com). As friends used the Web cam or their own images to 'afro themselves', the images spread across various social networking sites. Just a few days into launch, more than 19% of visitors had afro'd themselves. The average time spent in the campaign is more than two minutes.

"We are strong believers in word-of-mouth marketing and reaching into social networking sites," said Ryan. "Our fans are our best marketing vehicle so empowering them with a fun and engaging solution to share with friends is essential. The Afro Samurai campaign is proof that if users care about a brand or experience they will quickly share that experience with friends on Facebook and via email."