

CLIENT: City of New York **PROJECT:** NYC Condom

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

STRATEGY:

Develop an integrated branded system of product and dispensers for the distribution of large volumes of condoms: an effort to promote prevention against AIDS and unwanted pregnancies by the NY Department of Health.

BRAND:

- Created a logo and product simultaneously that is reminiscent of distinct New York icons, shapes and typeface.
- Intertwine the visual relationship of the already familiar and relatable dispenser shape with the confident colors in the packaging logo.

PRODUCT:

Design a dispenser that could be implemented in a variety of locations, from homeless shelter to convenience stores, to dive bar to posh lounge, thus creating a series of touch points across many NY subcultures.

PACKAGING/COLLATERAL:

Create a wrapper with an easily identifiable logo and color scheme that is iconic, and portable to many communication and advertising mediums.

RECOGNITION:

- Spark Award – Spark!, 2008
- ID Magazine Annual Design Competition “Equipment”, 2008
- IDSA – Business Week, Silver Award, 2008



“The brand was so successful the Health Department more than tripled the original production from 10 million condoms to 39 million in the first 10 months of the program.”

➤ Geoff Cowley,
Associate Commissioner of Department
of Health & Mental Hygiene



THE BACKGROUND

Where the Rubber Meets the Road

According to the NYC Department of Health, New York City, “remains the epicenter of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S.” The city has more AIDS cases than Los Angeles, Miami, San Francisco, and Washington DC combined and over 100,000 New Yorkers have contracted HIV, and many of them are unaware of it.

Condoms are the most effective method of reducing the risk of sexual transmission of HIV. So the Department of Health launched an initiative to dispense its own condoms for free. fuseproject was brought on board to design the NYC branded condom and its dispenser. By creating a visually iconic relationship between the NYC Condom and dispenser, we helped the city of New York achieve its two main goals: raising citizen’s awareness of the condoms and driving dispenser adoption by businesses.



THE STRATEGY

Access Creates Acceptance

Perhaps it’s our puritan roots or simply that sex makes us squeamish, but condoms, despite their ability to save lives, often carry a negative stigma. Our core challenge for the NYC Condom initiative was to lessen the negative atmosphere surrounding condom distribution. A comprehensive design strategy was needed. For the NYC condom, we believed a bold, approachable brand identity would make the condoms inviting. For the NYC Condom dispensers simple functionality plus a friendly form was critical. With the two pieces working in tandem, we hoped to create an air of openness and acceptance about condom usage, removing any sense of shame or guilt.

We also understood the design needed to be distinctly New York and appeal to people across numerous subcultures. This program needed to pander to populations at both ends of the economic sphere and in all parts of the city. Finally, the dispenser would need to withstand heavy wear and tear, while retaining its pleasurable and iconic aesthetic.



THE DESIGN SOLUTION

Big Apple Appeal

We designed the condom packaging and the dispenser together, enabling them to reinforce each other. The condom brand needed to invite usage and be distinctly New York. We accomplished this with bright confident colors against a black and white backdrop and the sans serif font family Gotham that has been used by the city since the 1930s.

The final design for the dispenser is vaguely reminiscent of the imprint a condom makes on the outer surface of a wallet. Beyond referencing its contents, its form has the equivalent impact of a fire hydrant or a mailbox - it is immediately recognizable for its central function, distributing condoms. It sends the message "take one."

A portion of the design challenge was creating an integrated system of dispensers and condoms that could live in multiple venues and environments. The dispenser needed to be equally at home in high-end restaurants, corner bodegas and homeless shelters. This meant a design that was adaptable to a variety of people and places, an iconic design removed from specific trends. The final dispenser is an 18" circle, 5.5" deep and weighs 12 lbs. When mounted on a wall, it dispenses the branded condoms using gravity. This dramatically reduced part complexity, service and production cost. The output space for condoms is designed to allow for easy access with the added touch of an elegant presentation.



THE BUSINESS IMPACT

To Protect and Serve

New York City is the first city to brand its very own condom. The first part of the project was an effort to create a brand standard for the original packaging of the condoms, which launched last year. "The total distribution of condoms doubled between 2006 (18 million) and 2007 (36 million). We expected the number to decline in 2008, but thanks to the new branding - package, dispenser, cutting-edge media spots - it surged yet again. We've distributed more than 4 million condoms per month this year, so the 2008 total could clear 50 million!" Geoff Cowley, Associate Commissioner of Department of Health & Mental Hygiene.

The NYC Condom design has helped create a program that encourages dialogue and interaction, addressing a common human issue in one of the world's most diverse cities. We believe the NYC Condom brand will prove its long-term value by consistently encouraging safe-sex practices and helping to reduce the city's (and the globe's) HIV epidemic. Because of its simple functionality, its versatility and its iconic look, the design crosses cultural demographics and provides access for city inhabitants.