

## **DELL**

### 'Backpack' 30 & 60

The simple act of carting text books and other weighty materials to and from school is a less-than-pleasant memory all of us can relate to in one way or another. Was it necessary? Well I guess so. In the analogue past, heavy and uncomfortable backpacks or sports bags were the only way, making your arms ache, banging against your shins, biting into your fingers...

Fortunately, technology has made many study aids available digitally, and Dell has made it affordable for almost anyone to have easy access to these materials with their well-equipped Inspiron computers.

In this charming, warm, light-hearted spot we pay tribute to spirited kids around the world who know the routine of lugging a heavy backpack all too well. We'll capture the personalities and the humour of a few remarkable kids as they endure the daily schlep. We'll do this in a funny but believable way that shows the lovable humanity of their struggles rather than going for laughs at their expense.

It's a fantastic idea, and we're very excited to work on these spots to create something really special for Dell. It's a company that's all about putting the 'personal' back into personal computers and we're excited to have a chance to create a spot that really captures this spirit.

## **BACKPACK**

Note 1:

We're going to talk about the 60-second "Backpack" spot in this treatment as the :30 will essentially follow the same template in a cut-down form.

Note 2:

We've given some cursory thought to the order of vignettes. We offer it here mostly for the sake of presenting the script in fluid terms. It's completely changeable and up for discussion.

1.

We open on the door of a typical American classroom bursting open as the bell rings at the end of class. Kids pour out into the hallway and we move in to catch a reedy young man dutifully packing his books into his backpack. He's quite focused; he's done this a thousand times before.

The books he packs are large hardcover tomes with nice illustrations on the covers. He also loads in a clunky calculator, a pack of markers, a microscope, and even a full sized globe. The pack is bursting at the seams and he needs to brace himself against the chair to get the zipper closed. It's a move that certainly compromises the contents of the bag.

Positioning the pack at the edge of the table, he shimmies into position, carefully wiggling his gangly arms into the straps. A deep breath and he lifts the bag. He's got it. A smile. No wait. He doesn't have it. He stops smiling. He keels over slowly out of frame.

2.

Our next vignette is set somewhere in Latin America. We're following a young girl in a school uniform walking with two friends down a typical tree-lined street...some homes, some shops, some light traffic, a bit dry and dusty. Still, it's quite pretty and pedestrian friendly. Our girl carries an enormous pink backpack slung over one shoulder and she walks in a clearly awkward and uncomfortable way, even though she tries to play it cool in front of her friends.

Up ahead we make out the ice cream truck parked by the side of the road. Her two, non-backpack carrying friends run ahead. Our girl tries to run, but it's hopeless, she's completely off balance and we see her on one foot wildly spinning her arms in the air. Is she going down too?

Before we have an answer, we cut to another location. India.

3.

The sights and sounds and signs of life all indicate that we're somewhere in the subcontinent – not the chaos of central Mumbai, but on some busy, sunny town corner. As happens in India, there's life teeming all around, the colourful walls of buildings are covered with peeling Bollywood posters, the storefronts done up in joyous colours.

From across a road, through the blur of a passing rickshaw, we see three Indian kids waiting for their rickshaw/bus to arrive: A girl and two boys swap sports trading cards. As we move in, the girl stands out, again dwarfed by her huge backpack. She hears the horn of the rickshaw/bus and she turns her whole body around to look for it. She doesn't realize the effect this will have – her swinging pack smacks into the boy next to her, knocking him over, causing the cards to go flying, which, in turn, causes the second boy to fall back - a beautiful example of the domino effect.

Oblivious, she runs to catch her ride.

4.

Cut to a rural European scene. We pan with a boy walking home from school with a girl; maybe they're sharing a pair of earbuds, one bud for each kid, a nascent romance perhaps.

We pull back a little and see what he does not. He's blind to the fact that things are (and have been) dropping out of a large hole in his backpack. Finally a giant book thuds to the ground and he turns around and sees the line of fallen goods. Because they're tethered, she turns too. How embarrassing!

He loses his cool a little bit as he bends over to pick up a few items. Not missing a beat, she runs back and starts picking things up too.

5.

We cut to a manicured park in Japan. A small girl almost hidden by her giant backpack stands at the bottom of a large flight of stairs rising through a beautifully landscaped hillside. Other kids are coming up and going down, but she's completely still, looking up, wondering how she'll manage to climb this mini-Everest with the weight on her back.

Everyone is moving around her. We finish in close on her face as she looks up the stairs. She lets out a little sigh.

6.

Cut to the inside of a school bus - we're back in North America, somewhere different from our opening location. Looking over the seats ahead of us we see the doors of the bus open and the fuzzy top of a boy's head standing in the stairwell. A hand comes up on the railing, and we see him lift himself up a little. We see the strain on his face.

At this moment the bus doors automatically close, right on his backpack – of course. The doors mechanically open and close though they don't give him the chance to break free. He's really stuck. We cut to the outside of the bus and we see the damage – a ridiculously large backpack stuck in the doors. A few of his schoolmates outside the bus run to the door and start pushing on the pack.

7.

And finally we cut to a Chinese girl making her way to the front door of her home (somewhere in China). She's really got a spring in her step, she's moving freely, unencumbered. She only carries a handbag, more of a purse really, around a shoulder.

She goes through the front door; the bag swings in right behind her just before the door shuts. No drama here. She's genuinely happy as she bursts inside. She easily swings the little backpack from her shoulder onto a couch.

It's an open plan house. She makes her way to a table near the kitchen where a Dell Inspiron sits (we'll shoot both laptop and a desktop models.). She sits down and begins using the computer. We see mom in the background cooking in the kitchen, pots steaming, dinner being prepared. We see our girl's face as she types, focused and smiling, her life is so much better ever since she's had the Dell to come home to!

Cut to pack shots and deal incentives.(Note: VO throughout)

## **OUR APPROACH**

We really want to capture the spirit and energy of these kids in a charming and heart-warming way. It's important that we're "with" them – we identify with them and we observe them at their level. We're not adults looking down from above. Our POV here moves about throughout each location, taking in the story from various positions, from a slight distance.

There's always a little bit of foreground and background and we find our character somewhere in the middle. This style gives us the feeling of capturing these kids as they are in the real world. As we move about the scenes we'll create a gentle but pulsing energy and rhythm to the spot. We'll create a subtle, distinctive style that will keep us right with our characters without being on top of them. This approach will add a layer of emotion and give us the feeling that we are truly sharing these moments with our kids.

The first vignette is very important in terms of setting our tone and style and especially our humour. It's funny but it mustn't be over the top. We'll see our boy from various points of view as he stuffs his bag. And this stuffing action is very important – we don't want it to come off like twenty clowns getting into a phone booth. Yes, we'll stretch the limits of reality a little when he puts that globe in there, but it reads as a playful exaggeration not a sight gag. Similarly, when he falls over our heart goes out to him, we've seen the exasperated look on his face.

Even in the final scenes, after our vignettes, where the product is described, we still want this to carry on the flavour of what we've seen before as much as possible. We want to create a stylistically integrated story from start to finish.

## **KEEPING IT REAL**

All along we're keeping a strong foothold in reality with our storytelling. These scenes should feel completely natural and authentic. We'll push the margins ever so slightly with our beats of humour, but it's important that we convey we're in the real world at all times. If our vignettes appear staged or choreographed in any way we will have failed to deliver the charm and the spontaneity that we saw in the great samples and clips you sent us.

If the circumstances and the stories read as real, we want to stress that this is not a gritty, documentary style of reality. On the contrary, this reality is highly cinematic and beautiful to take in. Our shots are well composed and our locations are pleasing to look at. We want the kids' struggles with their giant bags to pop out of these otherwise idyllic scenes. We don't want to show a scrubbed, and super shiny world, where everything is TV perfect. The places and objects and people we see should have character, imperfections, and little idiosyncrasies that charm and uplift and connect with our viewers.

## **CASTING**

Continuing the thought above, our students shouldn't be perfect United Colors of Benetton models plucked from the "It's a Small World" ride at Disneyland. No one had a perfect childhood, everyone faced struggles, and as adults our hearts go out to these kids in who we can really see all of the coping and learning and hard knocks we regularly faced at their age. These are the kinds of kids we'll look for.

We'll want to find kids who can be spontaneous and who have their own distinct characters. Yes, they should be familiar with sets and cameras and understand the basics of shooting a scene in multiple takes, but we don't want to limit ourselves to well-drilled child actors for this. What is key is that they must never appear to be acting for the camera. Again, we'll shoot in a way that will keep the camera a bit

distant, but still, it's very important that all of our leads project an energy and a manner that is completely natural to them without having to 'act.'

Of course it is also important that our kids help us represent the different global locations we want to show, so our Indian kids should look Indian, our Japanese kids should look Japanese, and so on. We heard you on the call when you were talking about the various territories and how, for example, showing a black person in China just wouldn't make sense to our Chinese audience. That said, we're keen to include a good mix of kids in our North American and European vignettes.

Which brings up another point we also discussed in the call.

The boards are intentionally sparsely populated for the sake of telling the stories clearly. We'd really like to bring more kids into a number of these vignettes. We don't want to make these kids look isolated or loners. They're normal everyday kids with friends, and families, and bulky bookbags.

Of course, our featured kids will take the lead, but it makes sense to us to have other kids around as extras.

Also in the last (Chinese) sequence, we thought it was a good idea to have a mom in the background. We didn't want to give the impression that our girl was home alone.

## **LOCATIONS**

This is a fun and dynamic spot, with several distinct locations that need to pin down the country quickly.

The right settings will give us clues as to where in the world we are and bring unique texture and vitality to each vignette. We'll find a group of locations in one country that can be art directed and shot in such a way to represent our chosen territories. We'll make these completely authentic down to the little details that tell us instantly where we are - the colourful commotion of India, the ordered beauty of Japan, portraits of American presidents in the classroom, and so on.

We'll work with compositions and well-considered shots that don't require us to build all of Beijing, or to recreate the Taj Mahal. We'll work with a great production designer who can outfit contained, existing locations to look exactly like the real thing without making a cartoon or an obvious reduction.

## **SOUND DESIGN AND EDIT**

We like the musical clips you sent and think they bring great energy and rhythm to the spot. It will be good to have something in the back of our minds as we shoot. We'll need to be thinking about music that enhances the cuts from one scene to the next, supporting this idea that we're travelling around the globe.

Other songs might emerge along the way, and we look forward to keeping that conversation going with you. Because we'll be moving around through many spaces (and countries!) it's important that we establish certain through-lines. A great sound design, one that both distinguishes our 'countries' from one another, as well as one

that links our vignettes together, will help us create a unified journey that takes us back to Dell.

The question that remains is: how much 'live' sound are we hearing as compared to music?

We think it would be great to include moments of key sounds that can help us identify our locations and add depth and realism to our stories. As in all other aspects here, we'll strive for something subtle and effective.

In general, we'll want a good amount of coverage to choose from in our edit. The edit itself should be smooth and just a bit energetic without ever being hyperactive. We'll find a comfortable pace that enhances our humour, without detracting from the warmth and the charm in each scene. Of course we'll need to reconfigure things for the 30-second version, although we'll want to preserve the style and the core elements.

Our ultimate goal is to take viewers on a genuine emotional journey. We're never nostalgic or cutesy; we want the strength of the kids' personalities to make these vignettes really resonate.

Final Thoughts...in a relatively short time, Dell has become one of the world's great brands. We want to underscore that here by really capturing the universal spirit of young students from all over the planet. No matter where we live, we've all lugged our share of books in the name of learning. It's a fun point to make that Dell is literally lightening our load, but we also love how it subtly makes a larger point - that Dell makes really affordable, well-equipped computers that are helping kids from almost all socio-economic walks of life to maximize their study time, and to have access to the infinity of knowledge that computers can bring into our lives.

We love how this spot has fun while gently implying that message too. Our goal here is authenticity, optimism and a really fun ride stemming from the always-inspiring spirit of young people.

We look forward to continuing our discussion with you! Thank you!