



# AWARD: ACTION DRIVER

## WINNER: BLK PRESENTS “VAX THAT THANG UP” FEAT. JUVENILE, MANNIE FRESH, AND MIA X

### BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

While a large percentage of Americans were getting immunized upon the release of the COVID-19 vaccines, President Biden’s overall goal of a 70% nationwide COVID-19 vaccination rate by July 4, 2021 encountered challenges among select demographics, particularly Black adults under age 40. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, they were the most likely to avoid the COVID-19 vaccination.

BLK, the largest dating app made for Black singles, was uniquely positioned to meet this historic moment by encouraging young adults to get vaccinated as 78% of its users are between ages 18 and 34.

BLK enlisted rap legends Juvenile, Mannie Fresh, and Mia X to rework the iconic hit single “Back That Thang Up” to create the timely anthem “Vax That Thang Up” to promote vaccine acceptance.



### CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

The primary objective for “Vax That Thang Up” was to prompt a discussion around the COVID-19 vaccine among those most hesitant to get it, specifically within the Black community.

#### ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES INCLUDED:

- Increasing brand awareness and BLK advertising awareness by 10%
- Boosting new registrations by 20%
- Expanding BLK’s social media presence

### CREATIVE STRATEGY

The idea behind the “Vax That Thang Up” campaign was simple: The vaccine is here. Finally, we can mingle, hook up, and find love safely again. The music video feels like the big, FOMO, post-vaccination bash of your dreams.

With a limited budget, BLK was able to target its young audience through entertaining, shareable, culturally disruptive content. BLK and Majority handcrafted a music track based on the 1998 hit song “Back That Thang Up,” with rewritten lyrics that helped get the facts out about the COVID-19 vaccine and remind singles of the benefits of dating IRL once you get vaccinated.

The communications strategy was designed to drive engagement, reach, and action. BLK treated “Vax That Thang Up” in the way a record label would drop a new album.

To drive anticipation, the campaign first launched with a teaser graphic followed by a :06 audio clip posted across social media. Next, BLK dropped the full almost two-minute long music video on YouTube and the campaign’s dedicated landing page at [www.vaxthatthangup.com](http://www.vaxthatthangup.com) – which included a direct link to the Ad Council’s FAQ webpage. Then, to engage existing BLK users, the brand sent push notifications and ran in-app ad units driving to YouTube. Finally, BLK turned vaccination into a literal badge of honor with the “Vaxified” badge on the app, allowing users to voluntarily display their vaccinated status on their profile for potential matches to see.

**“I like that they used custom line ups, custom intent/custom affinity audiences, and keywords audiences. While the core creative asset is the song, the video is where the real message about BLK comes through. I love that the song took off and that it was uploaded to music sites, but YouTube is the clear, prominent channel in this execution.”**

– Kyle Jackson, EVP, Precision Solutions Enablement, Publicis Media

## WHAT ROLE DID YOUTUBE PLAY?

BLK deployed an array of YouTube features to target, tease, reach, and inspire action among its audience in an authentic voice that felt true to the brand.

To drive reach and awareness, BLK leaned heavily into skippable in-stream ads with CPV bidding, targeting Connected TV and mobile screens. To reach its target audience and gain early momentum with their campaign, BLK leveraged targeting solutions within YouTube, such as custom line ups, custom intent/custom affinity audiences and keyword audiences. Bumper ads were used as a teaser prior to the full launch of the campaign to build excitement. BLK also launched incremental Video Action Campaigns with these same audiences and successfully exceeded both brand awareness and conversion objectives to grow the BLK brand.

**“Hip-hop nostalgia plus a very modern problem. Stayed true to the idea and didn’t nerf the concept or try to pack in too much.”**

– John Deschner, Maximum Effort

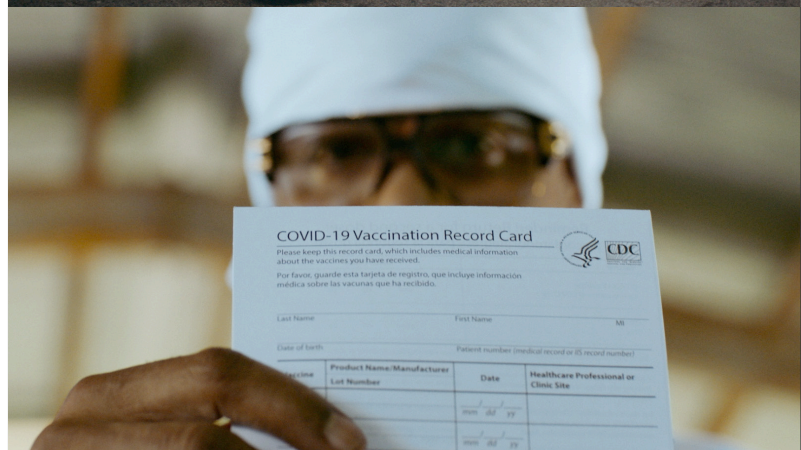
## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

The video immediately attracted a lot of buzz and became a viral hit while driving strong business and social results.

- 7B earned media impressions, including 190MM social media impressions. 3B+ media impressions after the first day.
- BLK advertising awareness increased by 21%, and brand awareness increased by 11%
- 30% increase in new registrations week over week. First-time paid subscribers increased by 22% week over week
- 350K+ BLK users added the “Vaxified” badge to their profile, 815K+ added to profiles to date
- 1.4MM+ YouTube views within the first 24 hours, 3.3MM+ views on YouTube to date
- BLK’s YouTube channel subscribers doubled within the first week

The campaign also drove a significant cultural impact beyond the numbers:

- People were also taking action, crediting the video to them getting the shot. (Some even posted selfie videos of them getting their vaccination.)
- Celebrities including John Legend, Stephen Colbert, Jemele Hill and Seth Green organically joined in the conversation.



## WHY DID THIS CAMPAIGN WIN?

**Undeterred by a limited budget, BLK’s “Vax That Thang Up” successfully generated both substantial business and social impact.**

BLK strategically used YouTube as an action driver — cleverly using the platform as a catalyst to accelerate social change — demonstrating that a force for good is also a force for growth. The brand had a clear understanding of its target audience and took a light-hearted approach in its creative style and messaging, thereby standing out from the judgey, dry, and often cringey “sea of sameness” typical of campaigns that address vaccine hesitancy. BLK authentically tapped into nostalgia and hip-hop history to create a music video that was a natural fit for the YouTube platform to deliver a culturally relevant message about public health.

The campaign became one of the most recognized calls to vaccinate during the pandemic, underscoring that an innovative idea married with a well-crafted communication strategy can not only entertain audiences — but also can have societal impact.

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