

From Video Business Magazine- June 14<sup>th</sup> issue ([www.videobusiness.com](http://www.videobusiness.com))



### SPREADING THE WORD IN THE 'HOOD

Urban Marketing Corporation of America (UMCA) finds ways to create awareness for corporate products in the urban world. The movie division of the company does the same for both major studio features and independent films.

Among the company's projects was *Nike Battle Grounds*, a street basketball tournament that was shown on MTV and recently released on DVD by UrbanWorks Entertainment. UMCA is now in the process of marketing HBO's *Def Poetry* from Russell Simmons on DVD, according to Carl R. Washington, president of UMCA.

UMCA employs street teams that go into urban markets and "act as ambassadors, telling people about the films." The ambassadors will go through the community in SUVs that carry the name of the film, giving out merchandise such as T-shirts and DVD samplers while parked in front of gathering spots, such as beauty parlors and barbershops, with one-sheets placed in the windows of the establishments.

Such peer-to-peer marketing includes more subtle approaches as well. Since urban marketing is "their job, their life," Washington says the ambassadors "share it after hours, in chat rooms and in videogame competitions."

UMCA will have a direct Internet component in July, when it unveils UrbanClassicMovies.com, a Web site that will be a "one-top shop" for people looking for all types of urban films from MGM's Soul Cinema collection to more recent sports programming and TV shows. Washington says the site probably will use an affiliate program for people who want to buy titles but will focus on marketing the product overall, in one place. ---Cindy Spielvogel