

## Mobile campaign supports bid to bring World Cup to US

By Dan Butcher  
August 26, 2010

The USA Bid Committee taps Telescope for the SMS component of its World Cup campaign

The USA Bid Committee launched a multimedia petition to bring the FIFA World Cup to the United States featuring a mobile effort in conjunction with Major League Soccer.

Months before the first game kicked off in South Africa, the group was already well invested in showcasing the passion for soccer in our country. To promote the campaign, USA Bid Committee launched a Web site and partnered with Telescope Inc. to power the SMS-vote support of the petition that began June 7.

"We've worked with MLS across all of their different marketing campaigns, and for their target demographic of consumers ages 20-35 or even a bit younger, SMS and mobile in general is a big touchpoint," said Jason George, CEO of Telescope, Los Angeles.

"It is very key to push on into SMS marketing much more," he said. "Launching the best of the U.S. World Cup based on SMS as a key part of an overall digital strategy is a great way to connect with their base, and MLS can also find out what fans like via online or SMS."

Text your support

Soccer fans can sign the petition by texting the keyword BID to the short code 22442.

The petition will be open over the next several months. In December 2010, soccer's governing body-the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)-will select the countries that will host the 2018 and 2022 tournaments.

The current bidding nations include the U.S., Australia (for 2022 only), Belgium-Netherlands, Britain, Japan (2022 only), Qatar (2022 only), Russia, South Korea (2022 only) and Spain-Portugal.

In addition to texting for the U.S. to win the overall host bid, fans are also able to text their vote in support of the 18 candidate host cities, which are Atlanta, Boston, Baltimore, Dallas, Denver, Indianapolis, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Nashville, Miami, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix-Glendale, San Diego, Seattle, Tampa and Washington by sending the specific city keyword to short code 22442.

The city-specific text-vote platform will be promoted by the individual cities on local television, radio and in-stadium at various sporting and entertainment events encouraging fans to support their home city to be the chosen as one of the host venues if the U.S. is selected.

The 22442 short code for the campaign was provided by Soccer United Marketing.

The bilingual, nationwide campaign is being promoted on national TV, including Fox Soccer Channel and ESPN, and at MLS games nationwide.

"The SMS campaign is being promoted on MLS games on TV and in venues at all of the MLS stadiums, as well as at the MLS Web site," Mr. George said. "We getting fantastic support from the TV broadcast side of it."

The goal of this campaign is to collect more than a million signatures on the petition to demonstrate the widespread support for the bid.

Being able to provide our fans with different platforms to support the bid is critical, which is why the USA Bid Committee chose to incorporate a mobile component into this important campaign.

By adding a text-to-vote element with promotional spots in both English and Spanish, the USA Bid Committee is letting supporters sign the national petition or vote for their own cities, which adds another dimension to the campaign that has amassed close to 1 million supporters so far.

The Bid Committee will use the overall campaign to continue to generate national awareness and participation for the opportunity to play host to the largest single sporting event in the world.

Mr. George said that in a sports environment that is driven by fan energy and participation, it is crucial to engage audiences while they are passionately invested.

Within the U.S., Mexico and Canada, soccer is well-suited for mobile campaigns as the demographic profile are heavy users of text messaging.

"Once soccer fans text in to the short code, they get a text message in response telling them that they can vote for a specific city name," Mr. George said. "MLS will ask them to opt in to their SMS database to get score alerts and be informed of promotions.

"It is part of the bigger effort to engage the MLS target audience much more in mobile," he said.