

#StayShadyMay

Every year, skin cancer strikes two million people in the US,¹ and the majority of those cases are on our faces.² The best way to prevent skin cancer is to stay out the sun – and what better way than to carry your shade with you! This Innocentive proposal, a response to challenge 9933684 “Create a Global Movement for Skin Health Awareness!”, suggests a yearly event known as **#StayShadyMay** in which participants raise awareness to fight skin cancer by pledging to wear a hat every day in May, and take pictures of themselves carrying their shade with them, wherever they go.



Going Viral

To go viral, an idea has to be both **simple** and **engaging**. Take Movember – for a lot of men, it's a simple, sometimes comical way of attracting attention to a cause. With **#StayShadyMay**, participants will be encouraged to wear a hat (or hats) for the whole month of May, taking pictures of themselves along the way and sharing them online, on social media sites like twitter, Facebook, and others. Hats with brims, hats with back covers, any hat that shields them from the sun will be fair game – so long as they take pictures as they go about their daily lives and post them online, under the hashtag **#StayShadyMay**. How are they “staying shady” this May? From sitting in their office cubicle wearing a hat to wearing one while scuba diving or skydiving – even while wearing another hat or helmet – a **#StayShadyMay** hat pic will be a fun and simple way to share a sense of community and a sense of humor, all while spreading awareness about skin cancer.

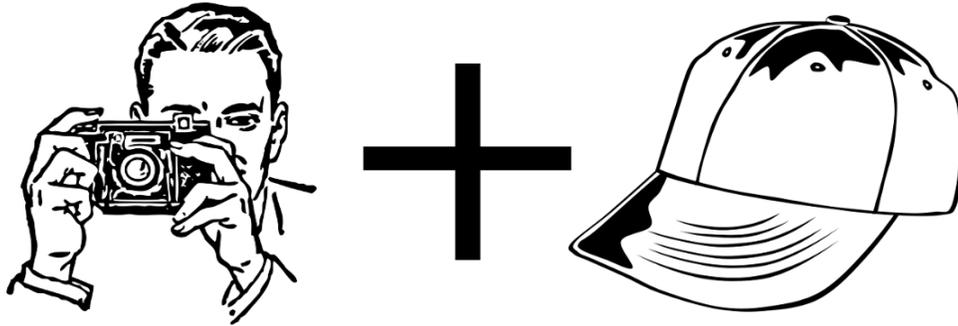
Timing

May is national skin cancer awareness month in the US,³ and the beginning of the sun-seeking season for millions across the country – as they rush out into the summer sun to stay healthy through sports and other outdoor activity. **#StayShadyMay** will be timed perfectly to raise awareness at the most crucial time of year to fight skin cancer, as well as piggybacking on the already-existing media coverage of skin cancer at that time of year.

1 <http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information>

2 <http://www.skincancer.org/skin-cancer-information/mohs-surgery/mohs-surgery-saving-face>

3 <http://www.skincancer.org/media-and-press/Press-Release-2011/skin-cancer-awareness-month-reminder>



Simplicity

The beauty of **#StayShadyMay** is its simplicity – because anyone can get a hat and take a picture, anyone can participate. It doesn't take much time, money, or effort – just the desire to be a part of a fun community and show your social awareness of the most common form of cancer in America. Just by sharing a picture of themselves wearing a hat and adding the hashtag **#StayShadyMay**, they can help raise skin cancer awareness.

Trending

From an administrative point of view, the main challenge of **#StayShadyMay** is to get enough people involved and active to get the ball rolling. Reaching out to groups like the Skin Cancer Foundation at the national level, or more local groups like those at the University of Arizona or University of Michigan (makers of the UMSkinCheck app⁴), would be a great way to start. Connecting with the moderators of skin cancer message boards, like reddit's "r/melanoma" subreddit, could also be helpful. Running a viral marketing campaign isn't easy – but it's a lot easier when it's both free and for a good cause, two things shared by **#StayShadyMay**. Once enough people have joined in, it could become an annual, self-sustaining movement (remember, even Movember had small beginnings⁵).



4 <http://www.uofmhealth.org/patient%20and%20visitor%20guide/my-skin-check-app>

5 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Movember#History>

Conclusion and Elevator Pitch

#StayShadyMay is designed to be a self-sustaining, low-to-no-cost viral campaign to raise awareness of skin cancer. By encouraging people to take fun and interesting pictures of themselves wearing hats, and tagging them on social media with the hashtag **#StayShadyMay**, they can participate for free in a positive online community movement that serves to highlight the most common cancer in the US and many other countries. By piggybacking **#StayShadyMay** on the US Skin Cancer Foundation's Skin Cancer Awareness month, and by contacting more local skin cancer awareness groups, we can get the ball rolling on a project that could make a real difference.

Image credits:

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Baseball cap: https://openclipart.org/detail/8303/baseball-cap-by-gerald_g-8303

Man with a camera: https://openclipart.org/detail/1032/man-with-a-camera-by-johnny_automatic

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