Case study: Balanced for LIFE
Web site design and development

The National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) designed a campaign to educate students, parents and teachers about nutrition and the elements of a balanced diet along with the importance of being physically active. One of the arms of that campaign is a set of web sites targeting six diverse audiences.

The Challenge
Engaging and motivating students was the primary focus of Balanced for LIFE. NAMA wanted the kids to go beyond simply knowing about nutrition and fitness to encouraging a change their eating and moving habits to make a healthier lifestyle happen.

The effort involved providing information and involvement to other groups that are key to a successful change: parents, media, schools, operators and employers.

The Solution
An entry page was designed to direct each user to the appropriate site. Three illustrated/animated characters were created to engage the students. Each page had an animated audio segment encapsulating the keys to better nutrition and physically oriented activities.

Just for Fun is a game that playfully reinforces the relationship between eating well and feeling healthy and energetic.

Portion Contortion is an interactive exercise that simplifies the food pyramid. The characters bring students through a typical day to help them calculate serving sizes and daily requirements for each of the basic food groups.

Helping students change their habits also involves providing information and tools to parents and schools. Vending machine operators were provided with a site to help them plan and stock a more nutritious snacks in vending machines and to promote healthier choices.

Trivia Treasure Hunt is a web-based game where teams of students sign up to compete against other schools, record their progress and generate prizes for reaching healthier goals.

The Nuts and bolts
The following media, software and features were used in the development of this site:
- Flash
- Audio
- Character illustration
- Arcade game
- National Trivia Treasure Hunt
- Interactive serving planner
- PHP
- MySQL database
- Dreamweaver