

## Corporate Commands

### A networked research project by The Institute for Infinitely Small Things (2004 - Present)

Corporate Commands is a research project by the Institute for Infinitely Small Things which asks three very simple research questions:

- 1) What are corporations telling us to do?
- 2) Where are they telling us to do it?
- 3) What happens when we do it?

Corporate commands are advertising messages from corporations addressed to an anonymous viewer in the imperative. These include well-known messages like "Just Do It", "Think Different" and "Have it Your Way" along with other, stranger messages such as "Be More of a Woman", and "Be Yourself Only Better". The Institute's research consists of collecting corporate commands for the online archive at [www.corporatecommands.com](http://www.corporatecommands.com). Members of the public are invited to add commands and images to the online database.

In the tradition of the instruction work, as pioneered by Fluxus and Yoko Ono, the Institute takes the corporate command as a performative challenge. For each performance, members seek to *perform* the corporate language as literally as possible in public space where the command is located. This means that if Cingular Wireless tells you to "Rollover" in Central Square, Cambridge, MA, then you literally rollover, as the Institute did in February 2005. During each performance, certain members of the Institute perform the action and others document the "results" – the actions of the Institute, the conversations with the public, any shifts in the way that the space is used - through a host of methods including field notes, video and digital images. The Institute has staged over 15 performances of corporate commands from Baltimore to Montreal.

The Corporate Commands research project does not *reveal* the corporatization of public space so much as embody it, use it, and develop alternative ends (outside the logic of consumerism) that the corporate command might serve. What kinds of social encounters can be produced using the microperformance as a backdrop? What might we learn from each other in these temporary communities? Who feels threatened by our impropriety? What are the social and political boundaries of the space around the command? In this sense, the Institute uses the command not as a protest, but as a passage: a way to make the consumer background of everyday life a means to reinvent everyday life itself, to reconstitute its boundaries, to have different conversations, and to stage encounters with what is alien and unrecognizable (such as people rolling around in white coats).

## Options

- [View Corporate Commands](#)
- [Download Quicktime](#)
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- [Go to Issue 002: Performativity](#)



**Rollover**  
Central Square, Cambridge, MA.  
February 2005. Photo by James Manning.



**Become a Believer**  
Central Square, Cambridge, MA.  
April 2005. Photo by James Manning.