

McDonald's of Chicago & Northwest Indiana

Problem

How does McDonald's differentiate its products in a commodity market?

Solution

Use OOH to create excitement with innovative designs.

Background

Following the successful Brazilian launch of the new "I'm lovin' it" campaign, McDonald's of Chicago and Northwest Indiana (MOCNI) wanted to make an impact by developing exciting "new" advertising units in summer and fall seasons. Fast food wars continued, and MOCNI needed to differentiate McDonald's in what was becoming a commodity market.

Objective

The main objective was to increase the sales of salads, McGriddles, and desserts. McDonald's was also approaching its 50th birthday, and wanted to create some excitement. In order to accomplish these objectives, MOCNI had to lead the Chicago market with media innovation.

Strategy

Starcom and McDonald's decided to surprise and delight fast food customers with unexpected OOH media, causing them to rethink perceptions of McDonald's. They needed to leverage the existing media campaign with hard-working OOH media. This campaign would be the first ever market-wide regional OOH campaign. The campaign needed to create "buzz" and generate interest with a high impact OOH branding campaign that included product introductions and awareness. The campaign used the tagline: "Only McDonald's Could Do That!": "Upside Down Shake" billboard plus many other traditional and "new" place-based formats were used.

Plan Details

OOH formats included: bulletins, 30 sheets, wild postings, CTA train cards, and dominant posting at Union Station, NW train stations, Downtown bus shelters, buses, trains, taxis and dump trucks. The campaign ran from June until September in Chicago.

Results

The MOCNI OOH campaign led to the highest June, July and August sales on record in the region. Also the campaign resulted in the highest average store sales per store and highest average check ever experienced. Products advertised in the campaign outpaced expectations. McGriddles and shakes sales both outpaced the national average. The region experienced a strong dessert sales increase when compared to the same period a year prior.

