

Chick-fil-A Chicken Sandwich

Problem

How do you convince consumers to try a “healthier” tasty chicken sandwich instead of buying “fast food?”

Solution

Cause a spectacle.

Background

Chick-fil-A's signature product is the chicken sandwich, served primarily during the lunchtime daypart. This means the restaurant chain competes on one of the fiercest battlegrounds – the fast food restaurant market. When compared to giants such as McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's, Chick-fil-A is outnumbered in store count nearly 4 to 1 and outspent in media tenfold. Moreover, each of these chains has already etched distinct images in the minds of consumers.

The vast majority of fast food outlets sell hamburgers as their primary food product, and usually resort to price promotions and movie tie-ins to attract customers. This competition has had a profound effect on business. Industry-wide flat pricing and rapid store growth have held average sales increases to under 2% a store for several years running.

In contrast, Chick-fil-A's attraction is not price or convenience, but the taste of their chicken sandwiches – a “healthier” alternative to hamburgers. In test research surveys, consumers spoke quite favorably about the chain's product during aided brand awareness.

Faced with these “David vs. Goliath” odds, Chick-fil-A gave its advertising agency, The Richards Group, a tough assignment – develop an integrated advertising and marketing campaign that clearly positions Chick-fil-A as a preferred alternative in the burger-dominated fast food marketplace.

Marketing Goals

Without increasing its budget, Chick-fil-A wanted its marketing effort to:

- Achieve a sales increase per store double that of the industry standard
- Increase total ad awareness by 10 percentage points
- Increase the loyal customer base from 23% to 30%
- Generate 5,000,000 impressions and \$300,000 worth of free publicity

Target Audience

The Chick-fil-A target audience differs from the usual fast food clientele, which includes many teens and children. The market for chicken is skewed slightly adult, more female, and with a higher level of education and income than the hamburger market.



Customers have a more active lifestyle and are likely to be in white-collar jobs.

Mindful of these demographics, Chick-fil-A avoided the usual fast food locations to build its restaurants. Instead it chose to operate in suburban malls and neighborhoods with a high concentration of its target customers.

Creative Strategy

After reviewing these goals and the target audience, The Richards Group developed the following creative strategy:

- Position Chick-fil-A as the chicken alternative to hamburgers
- Focus on a single-minded strategy featuring memorable creative that engages the viewer and generates strong word of mouth.

Thus the Eat Mor Chikin campaign was launched. (And it cleverly spotlighted a little known fact – the poor spelling ability of your average bovine!) In addition to the advertising campaign, a marketing program was developed integrating point of purchase, merchandise promotion, direct mail, and public relations.

Marketing Strategy

In order to efficiently reach the adult, professional and mobile target audience, the media strategy emphasized outdoor and radio. The budget was allocated as follows: 70% outdoor, 25% radio and 5% print.

A rotary bulletin program was selected as the base medium to maximize both reach and frequency.

