

McDonald's Iced Coffee

Problem

How does a restaurant stay competitive when its rival company outnumbers its locations three to one?

Solution

Use nontraditional OOH formats to stretch reach into areas where traditional formats are limited.

Background

The battle over breakfast between McDonald's and Dunkin Donuts is almost the stuff of legend in New England, and at the heart of the fight is coffee. New Englanders are notoriously big coffee drinkers, and in 2006 McDonald's unveiled a highly successful Newman's Own coffee product to compete in this critical category. Heading into summer 2007, McDonald's needed to re-ignite awareness for their iced coffee, and find a way to neutralize their competitor's massive distribution advantage, as Dunkin Donuts stores outnumber McDonald's by more than three to one. The answer was clever but simple: take the "coolness" of McDonald's iced coffee out to where people are hot.

Objective

McDonald's had a goal of exceeding coffee sales YOY for summer 2007 by at least 5%. So the campaign focused on four key objectives for engaging a broad A18-49 target:

- Create a McDonald's virtual "store presence" across the region to counter the competitor's distribution advantage
- Develop a breakthrough way to connect with people and get free sampling into their hands
- Find a cost-effective means of integrating the message into people's daily routines
- Generate excitement and buzz for the iced coffee product throughout the summer months

Strategy

The media agency developed the first ever McDonald's "Cool Spot," a mobile billboard equipped with portable misting stations and fans that could stop wherever people were out in the sun and offer them a cool break, along with free sample cards. The Cool Spot could go where traditional OOH inventory was not allowed: on the beaches of Cape Cod, the streets near Fenway Park, even the parking lot of a Wiggles concert in Worcester. Supporting the Cool Spot was a comprehensive OOH effort blanketing the region including aerial banners, TriVision trucks, bus wraps and bodega postings for the Hispanic market.

Plan Details

Flighting Dates: July 2, 2007 - August 26, 2007



Markets Selected: Boston-Manchester (MA), Providence-New Bedford (RI), Hartford-New Haven (CT), Springfield-Holyoke (MA), and Albany-Schenectady-Troy (NY).

OOH Formats Used: Bulletins, 30-sheets, 8-sheets, 2-sheets, Bus Shelters, Bus Kings, Bus Tails, Taxi Tops, Subway Car Cards, Bus Wraps, Aerial Banners, Trivision Trucks, Bodega Posters, and the "Cool Spot" Mobile Unit

Results

The McDonald's summer 2007 iced coffee effort was an overwhelming success. The campaign generated 522MM impressions throughout New England over eight weeks and distributed more than 5,000 free samples distributed.

McDonald's saw New England YOY coffee unit sales increase by 17%, which was a resounding success. Overall all sales increases in July and August were 4.3% and 7.3% respectively, illustrating how the campaign added to the sales momentum during the summer. From a media standpoint, it was clear that the OOH effort, which drove sampling and generated buzz in a highly efficient and targeted way, was a key driver in delivering these positive results.

