

Wendy's

Background

In September 2019, Wendy's announced plans to launch a breakfast menu across its nearly 6,000-unit U.S. system in 2020. Although breakfast at Wendy's dates back to the 1980s, its national "America's Soon To Be Favorite Breakfast" campaign launch on March 2nd marked the first time the brand unveiled an extended menu, underscoring its bold entry into the hyper-competitive morning daypart.

The initiative was ambitious considering this wasn't the brand's first go-round in the competitive morning space, but they were optimistic about their ability to pick up market share from an established incumbent (McDonald's) and other significant players such as, Chick-fil-A, Dunkin' Donuts, Starbucks, Burger King, and Panera. And so, in March 2020, the Dublin Ohio-based brand boldly encouraged consumers to leave their "tired old breakfasts behind" and try what will be America's Favorite Breakfast.

Objective

Wendy's objective was to build mass awareness of the new breakfast menu and grow market share in the breakfast category. They prioritized investment in OOH given its ability to deliver the scale, precision, contextual targeting, and creative impact required to cut through and deliver on their brand/business goals.

Wendy's executed a hyperlocal OOH campaign on a nationwide scale across 134 DMAs. A strategic OOH campaign was put in place to inform existing customers and target infrequent and new customers. The campaign utilized twelve media styles in 32 different sizes and reworked a master copy to make it more localized for each market, including Spanish language copy. Static roadside OOH inventory played a crucial role, enabling Wendy's to maximize in-market audience reach/share of voice in the key battleground locations.

To boost impact and provide a platform for relevant, contextual, and reactive messaging, DOOH units were activated in strategically important markets and moments throughout the eight-week flight. Nearly 3,000 media placements and dozens of media partners created a powerful OOH-led launch campaign that exceeded Wendy's goals.

Strategy

Historically, few brands have initiated OOH campaigns of this size, scale, and scope. And, of those, even fewer had to contend with a pandemic that seemingly changed the trajectory of a campaign overnight. The "breakfast wars" of 2020 reached a sudden stalemate due to COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and the Wendy's campaign, which was 13 months in the making, had to be reformulated days after going up.

The campaign strategy shifted from one focused on a robust breakfast offering to the brand's pandemic response to reflect the fast-changing marketplace conditions. The campaign acquired 921 additional digital roadside units and adapted the revised



response creative into 49 unique sizes at lightning speed, switching on locally/contextually relevant messaging to remind customers that Wendy's was still open.

As for the static boards, the production and re-installment of the new creative went into effect in a two-week period. The herculean effort showcased agility and the flexibility/scale of DOOH advertising. It also showed Wendy's steadfastness in converting the ad buy into a platform that conveyed its unwavering community support, as well as safe delivery and drive-thru retail options.

Plan Details

Market: 134 DMAs, including Miami-Ft. Lauderdale, Atlanta, Washington, D.C., Denver and Portland, OR

Flight Dates: March 2, 2020–April 27, 2020

OOH Formats: Static Posters, Bulletins, Shelters, Benches; Digital Posters, Bulletins; Transit

Target Audience: Adults 18+, Hispanics

Results

The campaign helped Wendy's defy the odds and successfully become a formidable force in breakfast during an enormously challenging time. An independent advertising effectiveness study proved that OOH made a significant contribution to the success of the campaign, with OOH ads boosting awareness of Wendy's breakfast menu by more than 16 percent.

Even more significantly, this awareness translated into visits. Wendy's enjoyed a 15 percent uptick in breakfast sales during the first week of the OOH campaign. And the daypart has settled in at 8 percent of U.S. Q2 sales and Wendy's executives say it has been a profitable endeavor.