

Rita's Italian Ice and Frozen Custard

Background

Rita's Italian Ice and Frozen Custard is the largest Italian Ice concept in the U.S., with 138 franchise locations in the Mid-Atlantic. Established in 1984, the family-oriented brand has become a seasonal favorite, operating from Spring through Fall. As a seasonal business, Rita's faces the challenge of maximizing revenue during a shorter operational period compared to year-round competitors. The key to its success is driving store traffic and maintaining brand visibility during peak seasons to meet sales targets.

Objective

Rita's Italian Ice and Frozen Custard has a history of using OOH advertising to connect with its audience, whether signaling the start of the season or promoting new flavors. The objective of its 2024 campaign was to assess the effectiveness of OOH to drive foot traffic to retail locations and measuring its impact on customer visits.

Strategy

To drive traffic and capitalize on impulse visits, the strategy focused on proximity targeting, using billboards within a half-mile radius of Rita's retail locations. To extend reach and maintain top-of-mind awareness of Rita's delicious offerings, the campaign was expanded to key thoroughfares in the region. A diverse mix of media, including printed and digital bulletins, posters, and transit shelters, amplified the message, reaching broad audiences on major roads while also penetrating local neighborhoods in the PA/NJ/DE suburbs.

Plan Details

Campaign Posting Dates: 5/13/2024 – 6/23/24

Markets Selected: Philadelphia DMA

OOH Formats Used: Bulletins with LED lighting and embellishments on select boards, Posters, Digital Bulletins, Transit Shelters

Target Audience: The campaign targeted families with young children, ice cream lovers, and people who enjoy all kinds of sweet treats.

Budget: \$150K

Results

The OOH campaign for Rita's resulted in a significant lift in store visitations. The study revealed a 48% increase in visits, with 53% of consumers visiting a location within one day of exposure to the campaign, demonstrating OOH's effectiveness in driving immediate action. Over 80% of consumers who visited Rita's stores lived within 10 miles, validating the focus on proximity targeting. Additionally, repeat exposure to the campaign led to higher visit rates, with those exposed 14 or more times visiting at a rate 3.2 times greater than the campaign average.

